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A
V I E W
OF THE
CONTROVERSY,
CONCERNING
MIRACULOUS POWERS, &c.

W E I V

OF THE

CONTRAVERSARY



CONCERNING

MIRACULOUS POWERS

1631
A

V I E W
OF THE
CONTROVERSY,
CONCERNING THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS,

K Which are supposed to have subsisted in the
CHRISTIAN CHURCH,
from the EARLIEST AGES, through
several SUCCESSIVE CENTURIES.

As it stands, between
The INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, to a
LARGER WORK designed hereafter to be
published:

AND,
OBSERVATIONS on the *Introductory Discourse*.

WITH
*Occasional Remarks on other Writers in this
Controversy.*

And a POSTSCRIPT, occasioned by Mr. BROOKE'S
Defensio Miraculorum, &c.

— adeo sanctum est vetus omne! —
Nec Veniam Antiquis, sed Honorem & Præmia posci!
H o r.

L O N D O N:
Printed for W. INNYS in *Pater-noster-Row*.

M DCC XLVIII.

V I E W

OF THE

CONTRIVERSY

CONCERNING THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are supposed to have resided in the

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

from the EARLIEST AGES, through
several SUCCESSIONS OF CENTURIES.



The INTRODUCTION, is a
LARGER WORK, and is intended to be
published:

AND

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MIRACULOUS POWERS

WITH

Occasional Remarks on other Matters in this
Controversy.

And a Postscript, occasioned by Mr. Boscawen's
Defence of Miraculorum, &c.

— aded Augusti est verus orator! —
Nec Veniam Antiquis, sed Honorem & Præmia possit
Hæc.

L O N D O N :

Printed for W. I. in Paternoster Row.



of Truth upon the Subject of Religion. Every
 Example he writes, carries the Instruction in it.
 Whenever he passes through his Lands, like the Ca-
 tion, takes its Colour from thence, and must be
 ting with Deity, and even one of the
 Thomas, the Tully, the Sully, who will not
 a Design upon Me, and John Galt. — Each Man,
 from whom he deigns to face against him;
 and he is maul'd out, like a wounded Deer, to be
V I E W
O F T H E
C O N T R O V E R S Y, &c.

IT is a true Observation, which I have
 somewhere met with, that the State
 of writing, is, like *Hobbes's* State of
 Nature, a State of War.—Such is the
 Genius of the Age, and the Partiality to favourite
 Systems; that, whenever any Book is published,
 the Question seems to be, not how well or how
 ill the Author hath supported his Opinion; but,
what his Opinion is: For as soon as That is known,
 the Business is done; and whether the Book hath
 even been read, or not, 'tis determined by the
 Gentlemen on the other Side,—that, it must be
answered.—And if any One should, by former
 Writings, be once supposed not to assent to every
 popular Opinion, or to *think with the Few* in some
 Particulars, though perhaps neither essential or
 fundamental in the true System of Religion or

B

Christianity;

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Christianity; he is looked upon, from that Moment, as for ever after incapable of saying a Word of Truth upon the Subject of Religion. Every Pamphlet he writes, carries the Infection in it. Whatever passes through his Hands, like the Camellion, takes its Colour from thence, and must be tinged with Deism; and even out of a *Life of Homer*, or *Tully*, there are Some, who will find out a Design upon *Moses*, and *Jesus Christ*.—Each Man, from whom he differs, sets his Face against him; and he is mark'd out, like a wounded Deer, to be driven out, and excommunicated from the Society.

THIS seems to be the Case of the Author of *An Introductory Discourse to a larger Work, designed hereafter to be published*; whose Intention being to shew, that we have no sufficient Reason to deliver upon the Authority of the Primitive Fathers, that miraculous Powers were continued to the Christian Church, after the Days of the Apostles; an Outcry is immediately raised, and the whole Body take the Alarm; as if the Foundations of Religion were attack'd, and Christianity depended upon the gaining, or losing, this single Spot.

IF I thought that the Truth of Christianity depended upon the Supposition of the Continuance of miraculous Powers to the Church, after the Days of the Apostles; though it would not make me have a better Opinion of some of the Miracles recorded of those Times; yet I should conclude, that such Powers were continued. But as I do not yet see, that, although it should be true, that no miraculous Powers

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Powers were so continued, the Truth or Evidence of Christianity would be in any way affected by it; I do not apprehend, at present, any thing so formidable, as Some may be apt to fancy, in the Proposition of the *Introductory Discourse*.

I shall avail myself of this *universal Liberty* of writing; and shall take leave to trouble the Public with a few Remarks, as they occurred to me, in reading a late Pamphlet, intituled, *Observations on an Introductory Discourse to a larger Work, &c.* And I shall do this, as on the one Hand, with that *Freedom*, which becomes an impartial Enquiry after Truth; so, on the other, with that Decency, which is due to the Character of the Person to whom the Public have given the *Observations*.

BUT the greater my Opinion is of the Gentleman's Abilities in general; he will not, I hope, be offended, that I am so much the more surpris'd, to find that he could think his Pamphlet to be any *Answer to the Introductory Discourse*; or satisfy himself with *Observations*, which, as they appear to me, are throughout, insufficient and superficial.

As to the Merits of the Cause, or on which Side the Truth, upon the whole, really lies; it is not the Intention of these Papers to presume to determine. I, at present, take neither Side in the Question; but reserve to myself the Liberty of judging, and determining my Opinion, as the Truth shall appear to me, in the Course of the Debate; when the *Larger Work*, promis'd, shall have been laid before, and examined by the Pens

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of the Learned. My only Design here is, to consider the Point *so far as it is at present carried*, between the *Introductory Discourse*, and the *Observations*; and to shew only, that, *as far as these go*, Nothing appears to have been said by the *Observer*, which any way invalidates the Argument of the *Introductory Discourse*.—In this View only, the Reader is to consider the following Remarks.

I.

HE sets forth with the following *Observation*.

‘The Author [of the *Introductory Discourse*] gives himself an Air of Importance, as qualified to settle the Point;—how long after the Days of the Apostles, the Extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit continued in the Church, or in what Age they were actually withdrawn,—whether ’till the third, fourth, or fifth, &c. Century. If he could have settled this Point, which by his Manner of introducing himself, one would have supposed it was his Business to have settled; though I should not have thought him the most usefully employed; he might yet have given some Proof of his superior Sagacity’. But I must beg leave to differ from this Gentleman, and must own, that, for my part, I should have had no great Opinion of the Author’s *Sagacity*, if he had employed himself in settling, whether the miraculous Powers were continued to the Church, ’till the

third,

* *Observations*, p. 4, 5.

third, fourth, or fifth Century; when the whole Purport and Design of his Discourse was, to shew that we have no Reason to believe, they were continued to any of them all. To which of these Centuries, therefore, the miraculous Powers were continued, is a Point, which I dare say, the Author never thought himself qualified to settle; and his very Title-Page might have prevented the Observation, that it was his Business; unless a Design to shew, that we have no sufficient Reason to believe, upon the Authority of the Primitive Fathers, that the miraculous Powers were continued, after the Days of the Apostles;—unless this Design be consistent with that of settling the Point, whether they continued to the *third, fourth, or fifth Century*: And therefore, the Observer, I apprehend, might have safely omitted this Reflection upon the Author's Sagacity, without any way impeaching his own.

II.

THE Author of the *Introductory Discourse* had said, that the Opinion there delivered is what he takes not only to be true, but useful also, and even necessary to the Defence of Christianity, as it is generally received, and ought always to be defended, in Protestant Churches^b.—To which the Observer answers, that, 'for his part, he cannot see, that this Question hath any thing to do with

^b *Introductory Discourse*, p. 2.

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with the Defence, either of Christianity at large against Infidels, or with Christianity, as it is generally received in Protestant Churches, against those of the *Romish* Communion.

His Reason why it has nothing to do with the Defence of Christianity at large against Infidels, is, Because, if Miracles after the Days of the Apostles were not necessary for the Confirmation of the Gospel, certainly they could do no Harm. The Observer hath here form'd his Answer, as if the *Introductory Discourse* had said, that the Non-continuance of miraculous Powers to the Church, in the Ages after the Apostles, was necessary to the Defence or Confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel.—But did he really think that the Author said this? If he did think so, I shall only say, it is unaccountable. The Author's Meaning is most evident; not that the real Continuance of Miracles in the Church, to the third, fourth, fifth, or fifteenth Century could have done any harm; but, that the appealing now to Miracles in those Ages, in our Defence of the Truth of the Gospel, may do harm; because there is no sufficient Proof of, or Authority for, the Reality of such Miracles; or that the miraculous Powers were continued to the Church in those Ages: that to make use therefore of an Argument in Evidence, founded upon a Fact in History, which Fact itself wants a Support, and hath no sufficient Authority in History to stand upon, is weakening a Cause instead

instead of strengthening it; since it as certainly does harm to the Evidence for Christianity, to insist upon Arguments which are not well founded, as to reject those which are so.—The Author of the *Introductory Discourse* says,—to appeal to Miracles in those Ages of the Church, when it cannot be proved that there were any, does harm to the Evidence of Christianity.—The *Observer* answers,—Miracles in those Ages could certainly do no harm; which is just as much an Answer to our Author, as it is to the *Koran*; an Answer, which certainly can do no harm to the Argument of the *Introductory Discourse*; unless it can follow, that, because real Miracles could have done no harm; therefore, an Appeal to false Miracles, and which stand upon no sufficient Credit, can do no harm likewise; which They who can see, may see at the same time, that a good Argument and a bad one, are both the same thing.

THE *Observer's* Reason, why this Question hath nothing to do with the Defence of Christianity, as it is generally received in Protestant Churches, against Those of the *Romish* Communion, is, 'Because, supposing it admitted, that Miracles did not cease with the Apostles, but were continued in the Church some Time after; it may yet be true (and Protestant Writers have shewn it to be true) that Popery can gain no Advantage by such Concession?'—The Author of the *Introductory Discourse* hath endeavoured to shew, in what manner Popery may gain Advantage, by
a Con-

¹ *Observ.* p. 5.

a Concession of miraculous Powers to the third, fourth, and fifth Century; since it is (according to Him) putting them in Possession of a Proof of their false Doctrines and superstitious Rites; these being the Ages (according to the *Introductory Discourse*) in which the chief Corruptions of Popery, were either actually introduced, or the Seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the Fruits, which we now see. By these Corruptions I mean, the Institution of Monks; the Worship of Reliques; Invocation of Saints; Prayers for the Dead; the superstitious Use of Images; of the Sacraments; of the Sign of the Cross; and of consecrated Oil; by the Efficacy of all which Rites, and as a Proof of their Divine Origin, perpetual Miracles are affirm'd to have been wrought in these very Centuries.

If then We have good Reason to deny the Continuance of miraculous Powers to these Ages; here is at once, a sufficient Answer to all Appeals to such Miracles, in Support of the Superstition of the Church of Rome: Whereas, if we admit such Miracles, we are plung'd into a Difficulty, which we shall not find it easy to get out of; since, if we admit the Miracles (says he) we must necessarily admit the Rites for the Sake of which they were wrought: And for these Reasons it is that he hath asserted it to be useful and necessary to the Defence of Christianity, in Opposition to the Pretences of Popery,

Vid. *Introduct. Disc.* p. 12. Ibid p. 22.

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Popery, to reject the Supposition of the Continuance of Miracles to those Ages.

IN Answer to all This, the Observer says, that He is not satisfied that this Account of the fourth Century is quite fair. Protestant Writers do not admit that WORSHIPPING Reliques, or Images, or Saints, were Practices known so early^b. But tho' They do not admit, that WORSHIPPING them was a Practice known so early; They must admit the *Reliquiarum Veneratio, Sanctorum Invocatio, Crucis Veneratio, &c.* to have been Practices as early as the fourth Century^c; and which superstitious Practices were certainly the *Prælude* and *Foundation*, the *Seeds* of all that Growth of Superstition which appeared in succeeding Ages: And since the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* says only, that in these Ages, the chief Corruptions of Popery, were either actually introduced, or the Seeds of them so effectually sown, &c. I believe the Reader will think, that the Practices in the fourth Century, now mentioned, are sufficient to justify Him in that Assertion; and that the Observer, by endeavouring to make the Reader believe, that our Author hath given in a false Account of the fourth Century; because They did not, in that Age, WORSHIP Reliques, Saints, and Images, in the high Sense of *Worship*—hath not dealt quite fair with Him.

C But

^b Observ. p. 7.

^c Vid. *Frid. Spanhem.* *Introduct. ad Chronol. et Histor. Sacr. in Secul. iv.* Tom. 1. p. 387. &c. Edit. 4to. Amst. 1694. *Pfaffii Institut. Histor. Eccles. in Secul. iv.* p. 207. ed. 2.

BUT however This be, the *Observer* says, that
 ‘as This is not material to his Purpose at present,
 ‘He shall not contest it, but suppose with the Au-
 ‘thor, that all the Usages mention’d prevailed in
 ‘the fourth Century’^k. — Nor is He ‘dispos’d
 ‘(it seems) to dispute the Author’s general Point,
 ‘that if We admit the Miracle, We must accept
 ‘the Doctrine in Confirmation of which the Mi-
 ‘racle is wrought’^l. ‘But the Thing (says
 ‘He) to be attended to at present is, whether it be
 ‘always necessary to consider the Miracles wrought
 ‘in any Age, as *Confirmations* of the concurrent
 ‘Usages or Practices of that Age.’—And He main-
 ‘tains that ‘it is not always necessary, nor is it
 ‘ever proper or reasonable so to consider them,
 ‘unless there be some *Circumstance* in the Miracle
 ‘which *specifies* the *Intention* of the Worker, and
 ‘shews that it is *meant* to authorize such Usage.’
 — ‘If the Case (says He) should be that some
 ‘Writer has told us, that Miracles were wrought,
 ‘not by the Ministry of any living and holy Men,
 ‘but, by the *Reliques* of the *Dead*, or the *Oil*
 ‘of their *Lamps*, or the *Sign* of the *Cross*—We
 ‘may admit the Miracles (if there is proper Evi-
 ‘dence to support them) without being obliged
 ‘to admit as *divine Verities* the *Invocation* of *Saints*,
 ‘the *Adoration* of *Reliques* or *Images*, or any other
 ‘superstitious Custom which then prevailed.’ His
 Reason is, ‘Because there does not appear to be
 ‘any necessary *Connection* between the Work, and
 ‘the Worker’s *Approbation* of such Practices’^m.
 I must

^k *Observ.* p. 7.

^l *Observ.* p. 8.

^m *Observ.* p. 8.—10.

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I must here beg Leave to observe, in my turn, that *the Thing to be attended to at present* is, not, as the *Observer* puts it, 'whether Miracles wrought in any Age, are *Confirmations* of the *concurrent Usages* or Practices of that Age' (Confirmations of the *Divine Approbation* of such Practices, I suppose He means;) nor, whether the *Obligation* to the *Adoration* of Reliques, will follow from *Miracles* being wrought by such Reliques; But, whether *Miracles* wrought in any Age, *through* or *by means* of any Rite, upon *Application to God through that Rite*; whether *Miracles* so wrought, are not to be considered as *Confirmations* of the *Divine Approbation* of the *Innocence* or *Lawfulness* of such *Rite of Application*; provided always, that *no Mark* or *Intimation* of a *Disapprobation* of the Rite be, or hath been given (which must be supposed in the present Case, or else We are arguing about Nothing) to distinguish between, *granting the End*, and, *approving the Means*. This is the Question: For if the *Affirmative* be true; namely, that Miracles so circumstanced, are to be considered as *Confirmations* of the *Divine Approbation* of the *Lawfulness* of such *Rites*; then it will follow, that wherever We *admit the Miracle*, We must *admit the Practice* to have such *Divine Approbation*; and then, to *admit the Miracles*, said to be wrought in the Ages after the Apostles, to which *Popery* may appeal, in *Confirmation* of its *superstitious Rites*, as by the *Efficacy* of such *Rites*, perpetual *Miracles* are affirm'd to have been wrought; — To

admit these Miracles, will certainly be a *Concession* (unless it can be shewn, as above, that some Mark or Intimation of a *Disapprobation* hath been given) by which the Church of *Rome* will obtain *Advantage*; which is the Proposition the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* maintains, and the *Observer* is disputing.

Now, the *Observer* admits, that if there appear a *necessary Connection* between the *Work* and the *Worker's Approbation* of such Practice; that then, if We admit the *Miracle*, We must admit the *Practice* to be a *Divine Veritie*; that is, We must admit the *Divine Approbation* of it.—How far that *Approbation* goes, is another Question; But it is sufficient to my Author's Argument, that the *Divine Approbation* extends (as I have above put it) to the *Innocence* and *Lawfulness* of such Practice; For This will give sufficient *Advantage* to the Church of *Rome*.

THE only Question then remaining, is, Whether there does appear any *necessary Connection* between a *Miracle*, wrought by Means of any Rite, upon Application to God, through that Rite, without any Mark or Intimation of a *Disapprobation* of the Rite having been given; whether there does appear any necessary Connection between a *Miracle* so wrought, and the *Divine Approbation* of the *Innocence* and *Lawfulness* of that Rite.—To Me there appears to be a necessary Connection between them; i. e. a Connection *morally necessary*; such a Connection, as that every Man of common Under-

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Understanding will, and ought to, infer the one from the other; which is sufficient to the present Argument. If We admit that Persons, in the Ages spoken of, have (for Instance) applied to God for the Cure of Distempers, through the Touch or Adoration of *Reliques* or *Images*; and that God hath actually *conferr'd* the *desired Cures*, upon *such Application*, by, and *through these Rites*, without any Mark of his *Disapprobation* of such Practice having been given; — What are We to conclude from hence? I think, if We have Reason and common Understanding, We must infer, that God *approved of these Rites of Application*, at least as *innocent and lawful*; and This, joined with so great and particular *Efficacy* of them, as God's even *working a Miracle*, upon *Application*, through *these Rites*, will infer the *Divine Approbation* of the *Use* of them, as not unfit, or improper Rites of Application. I do not see, how such *Approbation* could be more surely declared. *Actions* speak as truly as *Language* can do; and *Approbation*, or *Disapprobation*, may be as strongly expressed by the one, as by the other. There was a late Custom, even in this Protestant Nation, of applying to God for the Cure of a Distemper, through the Royal Touch; from thence called the *Kings-Evil*. If You give up the Cures, said to have been done by it, there is an End of the Question: But if You assert the Facts; I ask, does God approve of this Rite as lawful, or does He not? If You say He does not, it will lie upon some Persons to vindicate

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vindicate the Use of it, and of a *Form of Prayer* composed for, and used in, a *Rite* which God *does not approve of*, as lawful, though the Cures be asserted. But if You say He does so approve of it; how will You prove That; or defend the *Lawfulness* of a Practice, which seems to carry rather more *Superstition* in it, than touching the Reliques of a *Saint*, or a *Martyr* (for *Kings* are not always either the one or the other;) but by alledging the *Cures supposed to be given*, in Evidence of the *Divine Approbation* of this *Rite*, and no *Mark of Disapprobation* appearing?

'Tis true, God may sometimes see fit to grant a Request, when He does not approve of the Request, nor of the Thing requested; as in the Case of the *Israelites asking a King*; But then, He let Them know, *at the same Time* He granted their Request, that He *disapproved of both*: Whereas the Case is quite different, when He grants the Request, and works a *Miracle* for it, by the *Instrumentality* of that *Rite*, through which He is applied to for it, without having signified any *Disapprobation* of the *Rite*.

I do not say, that every *Miracle* is a Proof of the *Divine Approbation*, either of the Means, or of the End; For, what We may call a *Miracle*, may, for ought We know, be wrought by *inferior Powers*, by God's Sufferance; as *Moses* intimates, by warning his People against Those who might attempt to seduce Them, even though the *Sign came to pass*. But what I assert is, that if God Himself work a
Miracle

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Miracle through any Rite, upon Application to Him for it by that Rite, without having given any Mark, or Notice, of His Disapprobation of such Rite; This, as far as I am able to judge, must infer that He approves of the Instrumentality of that Rite of Application as lawful, innocent, and neither unfit, nor improper.—The Observer says, there 'must be some Circumstance in the Miracle which 'specifies the Intention of the Worker, and shews 'that it is meant to authorize such Usage'. This Assertion (for it is no more) I deny; and let the Observer prove it at his Leisure. In order to authorize any Usage, there is no Necessity that there should be any Circumstance in the Miracle to shew, that the authorizing such Usage, is the End and Intention of the Miracle; if the Divine Approbation of the Lawfulness of such Usage may be infer'd, without knowing whether the authorizing it were simply the End of the Miracle or not: But that the Divine Approbation of its Lawfulness may be inferred, without that Circumstance, will, in the Sequel, be sufficiently made to appear.

But let Us hear what the Observer hath farther to urge.— 'If God (says He) thinks fit to work a 'Cure by dead Men's Bones, it will not follow that 'dead Men, or their Bones ought to be worshipped, 'or that God approves such Worship, in Those 'Who receive the Cure'.——No: To infer the Worship of Reliques, in the high Sense of Worship, merely from Miracles being wrought by them, is an Inference too large; But We may infer

* Observ. p. 8.

° Observ. p. 10.

infer the *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* of the *Rite*, so far as it goes; which is all the Inference contend- ed for; namely, that if God think fit to work a Cure, upon Application to Him for it, *through* the *Rite* of touching, or venerating dead Men's Bones; We may infer (if no Mark or Intimation of His *Disapprobation* hath been given) that such *Rite* of Application to Him is *lawful* and *innocent*—or else I will throw away my *Logic*, and conclude that Nothing can be inferr'd from any Thing.

AND *this* Inference is sufficient to our *Author's* Argument.—He is to shew, that *Popery* may gain *Advantage* by Our admitting these *Miracles* to have been wrought, *through* or *for the Sake of* such super- stitious *Rites* as are before-mentioned, without any Mark of *Disapprobation* given: And an Advan- tage *Popery* will certainly gain by such Concession, if *Popery* can plead, or appeal to, such *Miracles* in the *Primitive Ages*, for the *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* of the Use of such *Rites* of Application: But this *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* I have shewn may be inferr'd from such *Miracles*: Therefore, here is *Advantage* sufficient to support Their super- stitious *Veneration of Reliques*, and Their Application to God through such *Rites*; and consequently Advan- tage sufficient to prove the Expediency of *rejecting* the *Miracles* appealed to for that Purpose.

ANOTHER Writer hath appear'd, whose Book professes to be a *Confutation of the Principles of the Introductory Discourse*. But *Principles* are not always confuted, with the same Ease that a *Title-Page* is writ- ten.

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The Principles of the Introductory Discourse are, I believe, far enough out of this Gentleman's Reach: What He has to say by way of *Argument*, lies within a very short Compass; and therefore it will be no great Interruption, if We take it in our Way.—He argues, that the *Worship* of Reliques, &c. was not so early as the *Miracles* perform'd by them; and therefore, that the latter will not infer the former.—‘I have distinctly shewn (says He) that
‘ We may allow Miracles to have been performed
‘ by a Power attending upon a monastic Life; upon
‘ the Reliques of Martyrs, the Sign of the Cross,
‘ and consecrated Oil, before these Rites and Institutions were abused. And it does not appear
‘ that Any of the Fathers declare actually upon
‘ Their own Knowledge, that Miracles were
‘ wrought as Consequences of these Rites and Institutions thus abused. And therefore though We
‘ allow real Miracles to have attended upon these
‘ Rites on the Authority of the Fathers, We may
‘ consistently reject these Rites abused as they are
‘ by the *Romish Church*.’ He admits here, that there were *Rites* and *Institutions*, relating to the touching of Reliques; through which, by a Power attending upon them, the *Miracles* in question were wrought; for He speaks of these *Rites* before they were abused, as they now are, in the Church of Rome. The *Abuse* of the Rites, supposes the *Rites* existing before. Now what are the Principles He is
D here

^a Mr. Comber's Examination of a late Introductory Discourse, p. 41.

here to confute? They are, that if *We admit the Miracles*, We must admit the *Rites*, for the *Sake of which the Miracles were wrought*. And that whenever any *sacred Rite* becomes the *Instrument of real Miracles*, We ought to consider that *Rite* as confirmed by *Divine Approbation*.—Now, how does He confute This? Why, He says, very shrewdly, that *Miracles wrought by these Rites*, in the *Primitive Ages*, will not confirm the *Worship of Reliques*, as now practised in the *Church of Rome*.—But, if the *Miracles* were wrought by these *Rites of touching Reliques*, or applying to God for a *Cure*, through such *Rites*, so circumstanced as afore-mentioned; This will (for any thing he has said) confirm the *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* of such *Rites*; which is the *Conclusion* of the *Introductory Discourse*; and which therefore stands unconfuted by this *Argument*. For the *Position* of the *Introductory Discourse* is, that, if We admit the *Miracles*, We must admit the *Rites for the Sake of which the Miracles were wrought*; and therefore, though it be true, that We are not obliged to admit the *Worship of Reliques*, in the *high Sense of Worship*, as it is now said to be practised in the *Church of Rome*; yet, it may still be true, that We must admit the *Rites as they were practised when the Miracles were wrought*; which is sufficient to our *Author's Purpose*; as it will be allowed, that such *Rites* were the *Seeds* at least of such *Corruptions*, as now appear at full *Growth* in the *Romish Church*. This is sufficient to our *Author's Argument*;

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Argument; For if that Church be once put in Possession of a Proof from *Miracles*, of the Lawfulness of such *Rites*, and of applying to God for the Cure of Distempers through such *Rites*; it is easy to see what Advantage it will make of it. For surely the Examiner knows, that there is not one Man of Sense, in the Church of Rome, Who would go about to prove the Lawfulness of the *Worship of Reliques*, in the high Sense of *Worship* (whatever the Practice may be) by appealing to such Miracles; but will be contented with the *Reliquiarum Veneratio*, *Sanctorum Invocatio*, and *Crucis Veneratio*, before-mentioned; which They may easily prove to have been Practices of the fourth Century; and will be satisfied with Our admitting *Miracles* to have been wrought through such *Rites*: So that to say, that They cannot defend, by these Means, the *Worship of Reliques*, in the high Sense of *Worship* (a Practice They disclaim) is saying Nothing; if We leave Them in Possession of a Proof of that *superstitious Veneration*, and *Mediatorial Application*, the Practice of which They acknowledge, and contend for; and which are *Rites* sufficiently unlawful; and, together with other Doctrines and Practices, affording Ground enough for our Separation from that Church; and to deter Us from delivering up to Them, Proofs of What We know to be unlawful, and unscriptural *Rites of Application*.

There is one considerable Objection (as the Examiner calls it) to our Author's Conclusion. — In the next

Place (says He), although We should allow real Miracles to have been the Consequences of the Performance of these Rites *when abused*, yet We might consistently still reject the Rites themselves; for if they can be proved' [*observe the Reason, for it is a curious one!*] 'inconsistent with God's Commands, it is inconsistent to suppose them to be confirmed by His Power, and therefore We must conclude these Miracles the Operations of evil Spirits.' — And therefore I will tell Him something farther that We must conclude too; and That is, that the Examiner's Thoughts must have been a little wandering, when He composed this Part of His *Confutation* of our Author's Principles: For, in the Name of All the Fathers, did any One, by the Miraculous Powers continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles, about Which the Question is — Did any One ever mean, by these, the Operation of Evil Spirits? — Is not the Question, Whether the Divine Interposition by Miracles, attended the Church in the Ages succeeding the Apostles? What then have We to do with the Examiner's Evil Spirits? Would the Miracles contended for, by the ancient and modern Doctors of the Church, be worth contending for, as the Operation of Evil Spirits? — Or would they be any Thing to the Purpose in the present Debate? — The Examiner's Argument therefore, as it stands possess'd with these Evil Spirits, is Nothing to the Purpose. — But this Gentleman, instead of confuting the Author He opposes, hath here argued Himself into an *unlucky Dilemma*, Which will oblige Him,

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Him, either to assert, that the *Miracles*, in the present Question, if true, were really the Operation of *Evil Spirits*; or else, to give up the Question, that if We admit the *Miracles* to be *Divine*, We must admit the *Innocence* of the *Rites*. For the *Rites*, We speak of, are supposed, on both Sides, to be *unlawful*, (otherwise these Gentlemen would have no Use for Their *Distinction*, of admitting the *Miracle*, and rejecting the *Rite*; For if these *Rites* were *lawful*, They might then, in Support of Their Question, as well admit the *Rite* as the *Miracle*, and so would be under no Difficulty from this Argument;) But if these *Rites*, be *unlawful*, they will stand in the same Class with *Rites abused*; for *Rites abused*, are no otherwise so, than as they are *unlawful*. If then the *Rites* we speak of, be *unlawful*; it will follow, by this Writer's own Principle, that the *Miracles* in Question, if really wrought, (were the Operation of *Evil Spirits*; for *Rites abused* (says He) infer the *Miracles* wrought by them to be the Operations of *Evil Spirits*; a Method This, of defending the Truth of the *Miracles* in the Ages after the Apostles, which the Gentlemen, who write on that Side the Question, will not thank him for. — If, on the other hand, He say that these *Miracles* were not the Operation of *Evil Spirits*, but *Divine Miracles*; then it will follow, by His own Principle still, that those *Rites* were *lawful*; Because, if they were *unlawful*, or *Rites abused*, they would infer the *Miracles* to be the Operation
of

of *Evil Spirits*; and therefore, if these Miracles were not the Operation of evil Spirits, the Rites could not be unlawful. — But now, if Divine Miracles infer lawful Rites; then He gives up the Question, and owns, that if We admit the Divine Miracles, We must admit the Lawfulness of the Rite; and so, instead of confuting this Principle, He has given it up, and confirmed it. — By endeavouring to ward off his Adversary's Objection, of giving an Advantage to the Church of Rome; He gives up the Question, viz. the Existence of Miracles, for Miracles wrought by *Evil Spirits*, and no Miracles, are, in the present Case, the same; since Miracles wrought by *Evil Spirits* will not prove the Divine Assistance, as evidenced by Miracles, in the Ages succeeding the Apostles; Which is the Point contended for. — And so much for the Confutation. I now return to the Observer.

God (says He) may reward the Piety of the Person Who applies to Him in Faith and Trust, without being understood, as approving the Superstition. — Without being so understood by Whom? — The Person applying? — Can it be supposed that He would not understand God's granting His Request, by the Means through which He applies for it, as an Approbation of the Lawfulness and Innocence of these Means; if no Note of Disapprobation were added? — Would not the same Transaction have also the like Effect upon the Spectators, and upon all succeeding Ages, if no Mark or Intimation of any Disapprobation be ever after given?

given? Which must be supposed in the present Case.—For my Part, I cannot see how They could think otherwise.—The Argument is, God may reward the *Piety* of the Person applying, by the *Care*, without approving the *Means of Application*.—But, as to the Man Himself, the Question is; Is it reasonable for Him to believe, that God would reward His *Piety* by and through *those very Means* which it is supposed that He *disapproves* of as *unlawful*? Would He reward the pious Man, by doing *That*, which would confirm him for ever, and rivet Him in His *Superstition*, without giving Him any Mark to distinguish, between *rewarding His Piety*, and *approving the Means*; but leave Him to find out, What, without the Assistance of the *Observer's* Argument, He would probably never think of? Surely it would be very far from *rewarding* Him, thus to *confirm* Him in, and give a *Sanction* to, His *Superstition*; such a Sanction, as Few, I believe, would not look upon as a Mark of the *Divine Approbation*.

BUT He seems to think, that the Man's *Faith* may merit such a Reward, as He calls it.—I shall not presume to limit the *Merits* or the *Rewards* of *Faith*. Nor do I question that the *Observer* thinks it will go a great Way: But This I may have Leave to say, that if He is of Opinion, that a Person's applying to God in *Faith*, through the *Veneration of Reliques and Images*, for the Cure of *Diseases*, is sufficient to authorize the Belief of a *Divine Miracle* to be wrought in *Reward of His Piety*; I do not see, but, by the same Method,

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He may vindicate all the present *Superstition* condemned in the Church of *Rome*; provided only, that these Rites be practised in *Faith*; and so, the more *superstitious*, the more Reason to expect *Miracles*.—If *Miracles* are not even now wrought by these Means, the *Observer* allows that they may be, in *Reward of the Piety*, and *Faith* of the Devotee; and what farther Mark of the *Divine Approbation*, and consequently what better *Vindication* of the Practice, would such an One desire or expect?—May He not with Reason say—God approves of my *Piety and Faith*, in applying to Him for the Cure of my Disease, *through the Veneration and Touch of a Crucifix*; by *falling down to the Reliques of a Female Martyr*,^r or the venerable Bones of a *Symeon Stylites*.^s—Would He reward Me with the Cure thro' these Means, if my Actions, and the Means, were *sinful*, or *unlawful*? Might I not rather expect, as a *Reward of my Piety and Faith*, that He would graciously give me some *Notice of my Error*, if it be one, that I might *avoid* it for the future; instead of shewing such a Manifestation of His Power, his *τίματα τὰ μεγάλα*, in my Behalf, and thro' those

^r Vid. Chrysost. Op. T. 2. p. 645. Ed. Bened.

^s There were *Two* so called. The *Former* flourished *Ann.* 448. lived 30 Years upon the Top of a high Pillar, whence He had His Name, is said to have work'd many Miracles, and died between *Ann.* 460, and 467. — The *Latter* flourished *Ann.* 527; Who, in Imitation of the Extravagance of the Other, lived 68 Years in the same Manner; and died, famous also for His Miracles, *Ann.* 595.—Vid. Cav. Hist. Lit. Vol. I. p. 438, 508. Ed. Oxon. 1740.

It is also said of the *former Symeon*, that He lived seven Years upon the Top of a Rock, where He had fastened Himself with a great Iron Chain. (ibid.)—Which if He had not, would certainly have been the wisest Thing His Friends could have done for Him.

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those very Means, which You tell Me are sinful, and offensive to Him; without the least Mark of Disapprobation? For, though some learned, and clear-sighted Protestants may understand, that God may reward my Piety and Faith, by working a Miracle, through, and by Means of, that Rite of Application which I make use of to that End, without signifying thereby any Approbation of the Lawfulness of that Rite; yet This seems to be a Distinction (He may say) calculated for the Meridian of London, and a Subtilty, beyond the Refinement of the Church of Rome.

The Truth is, *Faith* may undoubtedly expect its *Reward*; But then it must be a rational Faith, and its *Reward*, the *Reward* proper to it.—A Faith proper to Persons, Times, and Circumstances.—The Word *Faith*, in Scripture, is used in very different Significations; But from none of them are We authorized to expect *Miracles* now.—I know but one Sense of it, from whence any One may expect This; and That is, a *groundless imaginary Assurance*. This can be the only Kind of *Faith* to be found in the Expectation of *Miracles*, through such Rites of Application as, it is supposed, God does not approve of.—Yet this is the *Faith* which the *Observer* is here contending, that God may nevertheless reward by a *Miracle*; And He is welcome to make the most of this Argument, without justifying all the Superstition of *Popery*.

But the Reader will give Me Leave to take Notice here, of What an ingenious Friend suggested, in a Conversation upon this Subject, viz. 'that

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‘ They Who, in the Primitive Ages, may have in-
 ‘ ferr’d the Divine Approbation of the Lawfulness
 ‘ and Innocence of the *Rites* in the present Debate,
 ‘ from *Miracles* supposed to have been wrought
 ‘ by them; may nevertheless have made an Inference
 ‘ that is not a *right* one; Because God might, in
 ‘ His Wisdom, see Reason to work the Miracle
 ‘ through such a Rite of Application, which Rite
 ‘ He at the same Time disapproved of in itself,
 ‘ without shewing such Disapprobation of the Rite;
 ‘ as it might not be a *proper Time* for it; that the
 ‘ Circumstances, and State of the Church and
 ‘ Christianity, might require these Rites to be
 ‘ suffer’d as yet; and that, though an *Abolition* of
 ‘ them might, in itself, be proper; yet, that (as
 ‘ our Lord says upon another Occasion) They *could*
 ‘ not bear it now; and so that God might intend to
 ‘ wait a *proper and fit Opportunity*; to let the *Mi-*
 ‘ *racles* and the *Rite* go jointly at present, and both
 ‘ grow together (like the Wheat and the Tares)
 ‘ until the *Harvest* of Christianity was fully got
 ‘ in, and the Church so filled and established, as
 ‘ to admit, with more Success, such a Purgation,
 ‘ such a *Separation* of the good and the bad; but
 ‘ that the *Hour* was not yet come.’

I have thought proper to mention this Ob-
 jection, because it is more to the Purpose than any
 I have yet met with. I have endeavoured to put
 it in as strong Terms as I could, and to give it its
 due Weight.

But my learned Friend will be pleas’d to consi-
 der, that there is a great Difference between simply
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permitting or suffering a Practice (upon which the Stress of this Argument lies) and giving, as it were, a Sanction to it; working a Miracle through that Rite or Practice (as is supposed in the present Case) and thereby giving such a supposed Note of Approbation, as that the Man cannot but infer the Lawfulness and Innocence of such Practice: And therefore, tho' We may suppose, that God may, on some Occasions, permit, or suffer a Practice to continue for a Season, which, at the same Time, He may disapprove of, as neither lawful nor innocent; yet We cannot, I think, with equal Reason suppose, that God would also add a Mark, which should have such an Appearance of His Sanction, and Approbation of such Practices.

When St. Paul found the City of Athens, wholly given to Idolatry (or full of Idols, *καταδολον* *τοις παντι πόλιν*) and beheld Their Devotions (*τα σέβασματα*) Their Saera, Their Images, and Altars, and religious Rites) He told the People, Whom He perceived in all Things too superstitious (very superstitious, *δυσσεμνοεστες*) that the Times of this Ignorance God winked at, *ὡμειδων*, over-looked, passed over, permitted, or suffered to be Times of Ignorance. Now This, I will allow, is consistent with a Disapprobation of such Practices: But if God had also wrought Miracles by Their Images and Altars, upon Their Application to Him through Their Sacred Rites; This would have been more than simply permitting, or suffering these Practices; it would have been an Approbation of the Innocence and Lawfulness of them; and there-

fore inconsistent with any supposed *Disapprobation*.

BUT I would ask (in the Case supposed) what is the Man to do? He knows not the Rite to be sinful, or unlawful; but thinks the Contrary, when He makes Use of it. He hath likewise a strong appearing *Mark of God's Approbation* of the *Innocence* and *Lawfulness* of it, by his working a *Miracle*, at the Desire of the Suppliant, through this Rite. For the *Miracle* is, all along, in this Debate, supposed to be a *Divine Miracle*, a *Miracle* wrought by God. Is He now to wait, notwithstanding This, all His Life after, without venturing again to use the same; in order to see, whether God may not, in some future Time, give Notice of His *Disapprobation*; and which Time may, for the same Reason, be expected from Century to Century? Or, if the same Rite be supposed to have been practised twenty Times, and received, as often, the same appearing Note of such *Divine Approbation*; is He still to suspect, that, possibly, God may hereafter give an Intimation that He did not approve of it? And is such a mere *Suspicion*, to have more Weight against the Practice, than the present positive *Mark of Approbation* hath for the Practice?

Well, but still He may infer wrong.—If He may, notwithstanding what I have said, which places the *biggest Probability* on the other Side; it must, I think, be allowed to be an *excuseable*, and almost *inevitable Error*, in any Man who will follow His Reason; and the Conclusion such, as He could scarce avoid making. In a word, there is the *biggest Probability* of His being in the right;

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right; which surely is to out-weigh the bare Possibility of His being in the wrong.

As to the succeeding Ages, the Objection, now consider'd, does not lie; Because, if, in many Ages after, there should have appear'd no such Mark of the Divine Disapprobation of such Rites as We are speaking of; the Inference is *so much the stronger* for the divine Approbation of their Lawfulness and Innocence; supposing the Miracles to have been wrought so circumstanced as before mentioned; and that there hath been no Marks of such Disapprobation shewn, must (as I have before observed) be supposed in the present Question; otherwise, the Case now debated would be no Question at all: For, if it could be proved, that God had so explained His Will and Intention, and Disapprobation of any Rite, through which He had thought proper, in His Wisdom, notwithstanding, to work a Miracle; no One would go about to argue for His Approbation of it, from the Miracle; against His express Declaration of the Contrary. Or, if it could be proved, that He hath given as strong an Evidence only (but as strong it must be) for His Disapprobation; as the Miracle is of His Approbation; This likewise would preclude the Argument from the Latter. The Question therefore can be only, what Inference is to be drawn from a Divine Miracle, so circumstanced as aforesaid, without any Mark of Disapprobation having been shewn. And this being the Question; the foregoing Reasoning, I think, stands good, for inferring the Divine Approbation of the Rite, as innocent and lawful.

Is it be said, that the *Want* of Miracles now, upon Application through such Rites, is as strong a Proof of the Divine *Disapprobation* of the Rites; as the *Miracles* were, of the Divine *Approbation*; This I must deny; because the *Disapprobation* of working Miracles at all, through any Rite, may be sufficient to account for the *Want* of Miracles, in any Case, without a *Disapprobation* of the Rite of Application as unlawful in itself. Prayer to God through Christ, is a Rite of Application, which We know hath the Divine *Approbation*; and yet the *want* of Miracles, though requested through that Rite, may be expected in the present State of the Church; and accounted for, from God's not seeing it proper to work Miracles at all; and does not infer a *Disapprobation* of the Rite. — We cannot conclude, even from any common Request not being granted, that the Rite of Application is therefore disapproved of; much less can We draw such a Conclusion, from not obtaining the Request of Miracles. — Miracles ceasing to be wrought, therefore, through such Rites, as they are reported to have been wrought by, in the Ages now in Question, is so far from being as strong a Proof of God's *Disapprobation* of the Rites, as the *working Miracles* through those Rites was a Proof of His *Approbation* of them; that it is no Proof at all. — But however, an Argument from the *want* of Miracles now, will be of no Force against Those who appeal to Miracles in the *Primitive Church* as inferring the Divine *Approbation* of Their superstitious Rites; Because the same Persons contend for the *Continuance* of Miracles still in their own,

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But it may perhaps be urged, that God's *express Declarations in Scripture*, against all Superstition and Idolatry, are as strong a Proof of His *Disapprobation* of these Rites; as the *Miracles* can be supposed to be of His *Approbation*; and therefore, that the *Miracles* do not infer His *Approbation* of such Rites.

I would reply, that by God's *express Declarations in Scripture*, against all Superstition and Idolatry, must be meant, either His *express general Declarations* against all Superstition and Idolatry; or His *express particular Declarations*, against any *specific*, or *special Rite*. If the former be meant; it may be considered, that a *Divine Miracle*, wrought by any Rite, through which the Supplicant applies for it, is a *stronger Mark* of God's *Approbation* of the *Innocence* of that Rite, than His *general Declaration* against Superstition and Idolatry can be of His *Disapprobation*; where God's direct Will and Intention (as being delivered in *generals*) must be *less explicit*, and intelligible; and in which Case the most reasonable Conclusion would be, that that Rite, having such an *express Attestation*, cannot be a *Part* of the Idolatry, or Superstition forbidden.

If, by God's *express Declaration* against all Superstition and Idolatry, be meant His *express particular Declaration*, against *particular Rites*; then, I say, that it is not reasonable to suppose, that God would give such a *miraculous Sanction* to any Rite, as is supposed, which He had, in Scripture, given an *express and particular Prohibition* of; at least not without giving, at the same Time, some *Explanation* of this Conduct; to prevent the Difficulty Mankind must otherwise inevitably

be involved in, without being able to extricate Themselves; by seeing, on one hand, a *Prohibition* of the Rite; and, on the other, a *Divine Sanction* of it: And This, with respect to the *Supplicant Himself*, as well as *Others*; and whether He be supposed to *know*, or be *ignorant* of such *Prohibition*. If He be supposed to *know* it, though such Supposition be not very consistent with (at least a good Man's) venturing to apply through such a Rite; yet, it is less consistent with the Supposition, of God's giving Him such a Mark of *Divine Approbation*. If He be supposed to be *ignorant* of such *Prohibition*; yet still such Explanation appears necessary, as there really was such a *Prohibition*, and as the Man may hereafter be informed of, and instructed in the Knowledge of it.

BUT however This be; if the Rite, through which God is said to work the Miracle, be a *Rite*, of which He is supposed to have given, in Scripture, an *express* and *particular Prohibition*; whether He add any Explanation of this Conduct, or not; the Miracle, so circumstanced, is reduced to the Case of a Miracle wrought through a Rite, of which *particular Rite*, a *Mark* of the *Divine Disapprobation* hath been given; and therefore is a Case beyond the Limits of the present Question; wherein (as I have all along stated the Case) *no Mark of Disapprobation* must be supposed to have been given.—But, if the Gentlemen on the other Side should dislike this Manner of *stating the Question*; I beg Leave to observe, once for all, that if *this Supposition* be not included in the State of the Question; it is not only (as I observed before) making

making it *no Question at all* ; but cannot, in Fact, be *the Question* of the present Debate : For, if They suppose the Rites of Application, through which They contend for Divine Miracles having been wrought in the Ages succeeding the Apostles, to have been *Rites* of which God hath given His express and *particular Prohibition* in Scripture ; and should think proper to argue from that Topic, that *therefore* the *Miracle* does not infer the *Divine Approbation* of the *Rite* ; Then, since the Primitive Fathers have recorded these *Miracles*, and spoken of these *Rites with Approbation* ; They will, consequently charge the Fathers, either with being ignorant of the express, and particular Prohibition of Scripture ; or else, with approving Practices, which are directly contrary to God's *express* and particular Prohibitions. The first will be inconsistent with the Wisdom, the second with the Piety of the *Primitive Fathers*. And, I suppose, these Gentlemen will not contend for stating the Question, in any Manner that must be done at the Expence of either the one, or the other of these Suppositions.

To suppose these Primitive Fathers *mistaken*, as to the Lawfulness or Innocence of certain *Rites*, of which *particular Rites*, there is supposed to be no *express Mark* or Declaration of the Divine *Disapprobation* given ; may be consistent with the Character of Wisdom and *Piety* (because a wise Man may yet in such a Case be mistaken ;) But to suppose Them ignorant of the Unlawfulness of *Rites*, which have in Scripture, received God's *express*

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and *particular Prohibition*, is a Reflection, which, I dare say, these Writers will not presume to throw upon the *Fathers*. The former then must be the Case, with Respect to those Rites in the present Debate; But *here*, you see, the Supposition of *no Mark of the Divine Disapprobation* of such *particular Rites*, is included; and therefore, that *Supposition* must (as I have said) make Part in the State of the present Question: And if so, then, to suppose that the *Rites*, through which God is said to have work'd the *Miracles* in Debate, are Rites, of which God hath given His express *particular Prohibition*; and therefore, that the *Miracles* will not infer His *Approbation* of the *Rites*; This, would be arguing upon a Supposition, which is beyond the Bounds of the present Question; which therefore must be (as I have all along stated it) Whether a *Divine Miracle*, wrought for the Cure of a Person, *through the Rite by which He* applies to God for it, and where *no Mark* or Notice is given of *God's Disapprobation* of the *Rite*; whether a Miracle so circumstanced, will *infer* the *Divine Approbation* of the *Rite*, as *innocent and lawful*; and therefore, whether, if We *admit the Miracles*, We must not also *admit the Innocence and Lawfulness* of the *Rite*. — This is the Question to which the Debate must be reduced, and which therefore was the Question to be examined.

The same ingenious Person before-mentioned, seemed to think, that Something might be pleaded, from the Case of *Saul* and the Woman at *Endor*, in
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favour of the Opinion, that a *Divine Miracle*, wrought *through* any Rite, by which God is applied to for it, will not truly infer the *Innocence* of the Rite. But when the *Circumstances* of this remarkable Story are duly considered, the Case will appear to have *no Relation* to the present Question.

It is not *certain*, whether God interposed; or whether it might not be within the *Power* of the *familiar Spirit* to whom Saul applied, to raise up Samuel, or some other Spirit *personating* Samuel, by God's Permission. If the latter were the Case; then it is plain indeed that the *Divine Approbation* of the Lawfulness of the Rite can no more be *inferred*, than the *Divine Approbation* of the *Heathen Rites* of Application to Their Gods and Oracles, can be *inferred* from the *Success* which God might think proper to *suffer* Them to receive from thence: But then the Reason why the *Divine Approbation* cannot be *inferred* from the *Success* of this Rite, is because the Miracle, in this Case, was not properly a *Divine Miracle*, but a Miracle wrought by an *Evil Spirit*.

But supposing that God interposed in the Affair, and that Samuel appeared, not by the Power of *Enchantment*, but by God's *Direction* and *Appointment*: Taking the Case to be so; it may yet be considered, 1. That We find, Saul had cut off *Those that had familiar Spirits, and the Wizards out of the Land.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. And therefore must be supposed to *know before hand* that this Rite of enquiring of *familiar Spirits* was unlawful.

—2. *Saul* did not apply to *God*, but to the *Woman*, and Her *familiar Spirit*. He had before enquired of the *Lord*, but the *Lord* would not answer Him, neither by *Dreams*, nor by *Urim*, nor by *Prophets*, ver. 6.—And therefore it was, that He sought out a *Woman* with a *familiar Spirit*, to raise up *Samuel*; nor did He understand any *Power* to be exercised in the *Case*, besides That of the *Woman*, by Her *familiar Spirit*; therefore could not infer the *Divine Approbation* of this Application to *Enchantment*; on the Contrary, would think, that *God* was no way concerned in it; Because He had already refused to answer Him, and was departed from Him, and become His *Enemy*, ver. 15, 16.—

3. When *Samuel* appeared, He rebuked *Saul* severely, for this His *Presumption* in the whole *Transaction*; so that here was a *Mark of Disapprobation* shewn, by *God's Prophet*: Or if this be supposed to be only a *Disapprobation* of the calling up *Samuel*; yet the whole Turn of the Story, and the *Circumstances* attending it, plainly shew, that *Saul* knew what He was doing to be an *unlawful Act*; and that the *divine Power* interposed, unknown to *Saul*, to permit the Request to take place; and to raise up *Samuel* for a *Rebuke* to *Saul*, and in the way of *Punishment*; which can never infer the *Divine Approbation* of the Rite.—The Reader will now consider these *Circumstances* of the Story; and I shall leave it to Him to apply these *Observations* farther, and to compare them with the *Case* in the present Debate; and make
no

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no Doubt that He will soon perceive, that they are directly opposite to each other.

I ASK Pardon of the Author of the *Observations*, for having a little digressed from Him (though not from the Subject) to examine an Objection or two which occurred, in considering the Matter in hand. — I now return to *His Pamphlet*.

The *Introductory Discourse* says, ‘ That whenever any Sacred Rite or religious Institution becomes the Instrument of real Miracles, We ought to consider that Rite, as confirmed by Divine Approbation.’ To which the *Observer* answers, — ‘ It may as plausibly be said, that if God makes any *Man* the *Instrument* of real Miracles, We ought to consider *that Man* as approved of God.’ — And so We may, so far as *the Man* is concern’d in the present Argument. But there is a *Fallacy* in this Reasoning, which an attentive Reader will see, and which I dare say the Writer did not. — What do We mean, by the *Divine Approbation* of the *sacred Rite*, when We say, that it may be inferred, from that sacred Rite being made an *Instrument* of a *real Miracle*? Does any Man mean more than the *Divine Approbation* of the Lawfulness of the Use of it? — This is all which the Author, I believe, intended; I am sure it is all that is necessary to His Argument, to infer.

BUT

BUT now, when the *Observer* talks of inferring, in like manner, the Divine Approbation of *the Man*, from *the Man* being made a like Instrument; What does *He* mean by *The Man*? Why, *He* means the *moral Character* of the *Man*. But was there ever such a Parallel drawn? What has the *moral Character* of the *Man* to do here, i. e. *the Man*, abstracted from all Relation to the *present Case*? The Divine Approbation of the *Use* of *the Man* may, indeed, be inferr'd from His being made an *Instrument* of a *real Miracle*; as the Approbation of the *Use* of *the Rite* is inferr'd, in the other *Case*; But the *moral Character* of the *Man*, hath no Concern in the Argument. The *Lawfulness* of the *Instrumentality* of them, may, in each *Case*, be inferr'd; and that is all which is necessary to the Purpose to infer.

But the *Observer*, overlooking *what* it was in the *sacred Rite*, of *which* We infer the Divine Approbation, argues (*very plausibly*, indeed, as *He* says) that if the *sacred Rite* be approved, *the Man* must be approved; and so, by a loose and vague Expression, *He* thinks to involve the Argument in an Absurdity: Whereas, let *Him* be pleased to speak determinately; and say, that if the Divine Approbation of the *Use* of the *sacred Rite* (which is what the *Author* means by the *sacred Rite*) be inferr'd from the *Rite* being made an *Instrument* of a *Miracle*; then, the Divine Approbation of the *moral Character* of the *Man* (which is what the *Observer* means by *the Man*) may be inferr'd from

from the Man being made a like Instrument.—
Let Him argue thus (as He in Reality does)
and then every one will see, that the whole is il-
logical, and Nothing at all to the Purpose.

‘ And yet it is certain (says He) if Scripture is
‘ to be believed, that *bad Men* have been made In-
‘ *struments* in the Hand of God for very extra-
‘ ordinary Purposes’. And ’tis true, that as from
hence no more can be inferr’d, than the Divine Ap-
probation of the *Instrumentality of bad Men in His*
Hand, for very extraordinary Purposes : So neither
in the other Case, can any Thing more be inferr’d,
than the Divine Approbation of the *Instrumentality*
of the *Rite*.—Nor is any Thing more contended
for, or necessary to the Argument.—The *Appro-*
bation of the Instrumentality is the only Thing We
are concerned with ; and That, We see, is equally
inferr’d in *both* Cases alike. The Reader may, per-
haps, think that I ought to make an Apology for
having taken any Notice of this *Observation*.—
But every Thing which comes from so eminent a
Writer, as the Author of the *Observations*, is
worthy our Regard, and even His *Sophisms* have
their Dignity. This might be a sufficient An-
swer to all the *Observer* proceeds to quote from Dr.
Claget, to the same Purpose ; But, in Respect to
so great a Name, and that *Names* may not pass
for *Arguments*, I shall take a particular Notice
of it.

THE *Observer* cites it, as ‘ the Determination of
‘ One of the ablest Writers of His Time, Who had

40 *View of the Controversy*

‘ well considered the Case*.’ Not intending, I suppose, that We should subscribe to any Man’s *Determination*, any farther than His *Argument* reaches.—But it seems He had *well considered the Case*, was *One of the ablest Writers of His Time*, and *replies to the very Argument*†.

FROM One of the *ablest Writers of His Time*, and Who had *well considered the Case*, One would expect Something *considerable*.—Let Us then attend to it.

‘ THERE is no Reason to suppose (says Dr. Claget) that *every Circumstance* of the Devotion of Christians that received miraculous Relief must be *attested* by those Miracles which God wrought in Confirmation of the Truth of Christianity‡.’ This is Nothing to our Purpose. For the Question is not, whether *every Circumstance* of the Devotion in *general* of Christians, be attested by the Miracles wrought in Confirmation of *Christianity in general*: But whether the Lawfulness or *Innocence* of the Use of *any particular Rite* of Devotion, be attested by *Miracles* wrought by *Means of that Rite*, upon Application to God *through* the same; Which is quite a different Thing.—But Dr. Claget goes on.

‘ GOD has made Use even of wicked Men for the working of Miracles; and I cannot understand, why a Miracle may not be wrought in Behalf of a *Sincere* Man, without approving His *Weakness*, any more than the Other’s *Wickedness* is

* Observ. p. 11.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

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' is approved by God's making Use of Him to
' testify the Truth'. I answer; In this Case, The
Weakness of the Man, is not What We infer the Di-
vine Approbation of; but, of the lawful Use of the
Rite.—In the other Case, the *Wickedness* of the
Man, His *general moral Character*, is not approved
by His being made an *Instrument* of a *Miracle*;
because His *moral Character* has no *Connection with*
or *Relation to*, the *Miracle*. Nothing can be in-
ferr'd, for that Reason, from a *Divine Miracle*,
wrought by means of a *bad Man*, but that God
approves of the *Instrumentality of the Man*; and
Nothing is inferr'd, in the other Case, but that He
approves of the *Lawfulness or Innocence of the Rite*
(between which, and the *Miracle* being wrought
by means of that Rite, upon Application through
the same, I have already shewn that there is a ne-
cessary *Connection*) which indeed are the only two
Things to be compared, not the *moral Characters* of
the Men.

THE *Observer* next tells a Story, which Dr.
Claget mentions from *Jerom*; ' that *Hesychius*, a
' holy Man, ventured His Life to steal the Body
' of *Hilarion* the Monk, out of the Garden of
' *Cyprus*, where He was buried, to carry it to
' *Palestine*; and that *Constantia* took the Loss of
' the Body so to Heart, that She died upon
' it.—That even in His Time there were great
' Miracles done in both Places; which raised a
' Contention between Those of *Palestine* and Those

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* *Observ.* p. 11.

‘ of *Cyprus*, one pretending to his *Body*, the other
 ‘ to his *Spirit* ;’ being willing, it seems, to divide
 the *Saint* between them. — I shall forbear making
 any Remarks upon the Story.—St. *Jerom* and Dr.
Claget, and perhaps more *Doctōrs* have told it.
 But however, Dr. *Claget*, it seems, — ‘ does not
 ‘ pretend to *vouch for the Truth of it*,’ [though St.
Jerom, His Author, does *vouch for it*, and that the
 Miracles were done even in *His Time*] ‘ as with-
 ‘ out Doubt (says the *Observer*, very gravely) all
 ‘ Stories of *this Kind* are not to be received in-
 ‘ differently: But to the Purpose of our present
 ‘ Argument, He [Dr. *Claget*] makes this Re-
 ‘ mark upon it—If Miracles were done in both
 ‘ Places, I am pretty well satisfied that God did
 ‘ not thereby intend to demonstrate either the
 ‘ Clearness of *Hefychius*, or the Discretion of *Con-*
 ‘ *stantia* in this Business, nor approve the violent
 ‘ Passion of Either of Them for Reliques.—That
 ‘ those Miracles did by no means *canonize* the
 ‘ *Weakness* of any holy Person, in the Matter of
 ‘ *Martyrs*, or *Saints*, or *Reliques*, nor the *Indif-*
 ‘ *cretion* of *Hefychius* or *Constantia*, nor did they
 ‘ give any Authority at all to such Examples^b.’

Now, I believe, the intelligent Reader will
 easily see, that all this long Story, and the Re-
 mark upon it, are so far from being any *Deter-*
mination of the Question, that they are *intirely fo-*
reign.—The Author of the *Introductory Discourse*
 maintains, that a *Miracle* wrought by *Divine Power*
 for

^b *Observ.* p. 11.—13.

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for the Cure of a Person, *by means of the touching* (for Instance) of *Reliques*, upon the Person's applying to God for that Cure, *by the Veneration and Touch* of such *Reliques*; will infer that *such Veneration*, and the Lawfulness or *Innocence* of the *Use of such a Rite* of Application, have the *Divine Approbation*. —And now, What have We in Answer to This? Why, We have a Remark upon an idle Story, about a *holy Man stealing a Monk*; and *Constantia's* dying upon it. —That the *Miracles* said to be wrought, did not infer the *Innocence* of the One, nor the *Discretion* of the Other. —But What is all This to the Purpose? Does any One say, that *Miracles* wrought by means of a *Relique*, would infer the *Divine Approbation* of *Theft*, or *Folly*? But still, if *Divine Miracles* had been wrought upon *Hesychius*, or *Constantia*, or any Other, *by means of this Stolen Relique*, *through Application* made, *by a religious Veneration* of it; This, I imagine, would be thought to infer the *Divine Approbation* of the Lawfulness or *Innocence* of the *Use of such a Rite* of Application; Which is all the *Author* is concern'd to defend—whatever becomes of the rest of the Story.

SINCE then, by the *Observer's* Confession, if there appear to be a *necessary Connection* between the *Work*, and the *Worker's Approbation* of such Practice^c; We must, in such Case, admit the Lawfulness and *Innocence* of the *Use of the Rite*, if We admit the *Miracle* to be wrought by Appli-

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^c Observ. p. 9. 10.

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cation *through* such Rite; and since it has been; I think, sufficiently made to appear, that there is a necessary Connection between the *Work*, the Miracle so wrought, and the *Worker's* Approbation of the Lawfulness and Innocence of the Use of such Practice, such Rite, through which it is wrought; it follows, that either We must reject the Truth of the *Miracles* said to have been wrought through such Sort of Rites; or else We must admit them as Confirmations of the Lawfulness or Innocence of the Use of such Rites: And therefore, the conceding such Miracles, so wrought, in those Centuries, to which the *Papists* appeal for such Miracles; is a Concession, which, if Popery cannot gain Advantage by, I know not any by which it can; since it appears to Me to be a direct Concession, in Support of the like superstitious Rites used in the Church of Rome. So that this Assertion turns out, to be neither so bold, nor so needlessly adventured upon, as the Observer represents it.— ‘When We see this Writer (says He) thus needlessly adventuring upon a bold Assertion, and setting All Christian Writers, both ancient and modern, at absolute Defiance; it gives but too much Cause for Suspicion, that Something else lay at Bottom, to excite Him to this Undertaking, besides the Growth of Popery in this Kingdom’^d. —As to the Charge of setting All Christian Writers, both ancient and modern, at absolute Defiance; it will more properly be taken notice of in another Place. As to the Assertion being boldly and needlessly adventured upon; I shall only observe, that if to assert, that ‘a Con-

^d Observ. p. 5.

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'cession of such Miracles to the Ages after the
' Apostles, to which *Papists* may appeal in Support
' of Their superstitious Rites, will give Advantage
' to *Popery*', be a Proposition which the Author of
the *Introductory Discourse* can prove; and if, on
the other side, to assert, that '*Popery* can gain no
' Advantage by such Concession,' be a Proposition
which the *Observer* neither has, nor can prove;
the Reader will judge, to which of the *two Assertions*, the *Boldness* is properly to be charged.

BUT there is Cause for Suspicion (it seems) that
Something else lies at Bottom.—But if the Foundation
of this Suspicion (which We find was the supposed
Boldness and *Needlessness* of the Assertion) is taken
away; the Author will be in no great Pain for
the *Observer's* Superstructure; His *Observation* that
Something else must lie at Bottom.—The Author of
the *Introductory Discourse* hath shewn (as He thinks)
that the Growth of *Popery* may be advantaged by
the Concession. If the *Observer* thinks the Con-
trary; Is it not a sufficient Account of this Phae-
nomenon, that *Doctors differ*, and that One of
Them is mistaken?—Why must *Something else*
lie at Bottom?—I would say Nothing willingly,
that might justly give Offence to the *Observer*; But
I cannot avoid saying, that the throwing out dark
Suspensions and dubious Innuendos, of *Something else*
lying at Bottom, Which always leaves the candid
Reader to suppose the very worst He can; though
it be but too common a Custom, is yet not very
consistent with the Charity of a Christian Writer,
whether ancient or modern.

III.

THE Author of the *Introductory Discourse* says, that ‘the pretended Miracles of the fourth Century, were not only in general, and for the greatest Part, but intirely and universally the Effects of Fraud and Imposture’.—This the *Observer* repeats, and adds — ‘meaning in the Bishops and Clergy, Whom He (the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*) charges but a few Lines after, with tampering with Lies and Forgeries. Surely This is an unreasonable Stretch’.—But if the Bishops and Clergy believed, reported, referred to, or argued upon false Miracles; is not This sufficient to authorize the Charge of *tampering* with Lies and Forgeries; without concluding, that He must mean to Charge the Bishops and Clergy with being the *Liars* and *Forgers* Themselves?—To fix This as His Meaning from What He hath here said, is therefore, to say the least of it, a *very unreasonable Stretch*.

‘WHY is it not as easy (says the *Observer*) to ascribe the Credit of such Miracles to mere Superstition and Credulity, as to Fraud and Imposture?’—The Credit of them with Whom?—With the Relators, and Others, in the same or after Ages, Who were *not the Spectators* of these pretended Miracles; the Credit of them may possibly

* *Intro. Dif.* p. 29. † *Observat.* p. 13. *Intro. Disc.* p. 30.
 ‡ *Observ.* p. 14.

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bly be ascribed merely to *Superstition* and *Credulity* in *Them*: But the Miracles must still be, *originally*, the Effects of *Fraud* and *Imposture*.—As to the Persons on Whom they are said to have been wrought; if they really were not wrought, they could have no Credit with *Them* from any supposed *Superstition* or *Credulity*: For no Man could believe He was cured of a Distemper, by the Touch of a Relique or a Crucifix, or the Oil of the Lamps; when He found Himself still labouring under the same.—If such Miracles therefore were pretended, by the *Persons Themselves* on Whom such Cures were said to have been wrought, and were not real; they must here be the Effect of *Fraud and Imposture*.—As to the *Spectators*, and the *Populace* of those Times; neither could mere *Superstition* and *Credulity* be sufficient here to account for the *Universality*, and *Series of Credit*, which these pretended Miracles obtained. —A few Persons, in a few Instances, may possibly be supposed, through mere *Superstition* and *Credulity*, to have fancied They have seen Miracles of this Kind, when there have been none: But it cannot easily be supposed, that such a *Number* of pretended *incredible* Events, as are recorded of the *fourth*, and succeeding Ages, could have been all believed really to have been true Events by the *Spectators*, and *Populace* of those Ages, *merely* from *Their own Superstition and Credulity*. The *Fraud* of *Others* must be called in to account for it. These numerous pretended Miracles could not have had such a *Series of Credit*, if no such Cures, or Effects, of whatever Kind they were, had *appeared*

peared to Them to have been miraculously wrought, by such Rites as are before-mentioned; and if there were really *no* such Events at all, as were pretended; or if not *miraculous*; they could not have so *constantly*, or *frequently* appeared to have attended the Rites, *merely* from the *Superstition* and *Credulity* of the *Spectators*; but must be owing to some *Fraud* and *Imposture* *behind the Scene*. A frequent *Repetition* and *Trial* of the same Rites, would have discovered the Mistake, unless the Success had been supported by the *Artifice* of *Others*; and cannot be supposed to have descended through several Centuries; the same Rites to have been perpetually applied to, and the same, or the like Events to have appeared regularly to follow; unless *Fraud* and *Imposture* be taken in to account for the Success of the Delusion.—In that *bungling Trick* (as Mr. Addison calls it) played at Naples with the Blood of St. Januarius; it may perhaps be supposed, that the Spectators may have been so far carried by their *Superstition* and *Credulity*, as to have imagined the *Blood*, once or twice, to have *liquified*, at the Approach of the *Saint's Head*, when it really did not: But can it be supposed, that the *same Event* could have *always* and *constantly* appeared, and have been believed to be real, through *mere Superstition* and *Credulity*, if there really was never any such *Event*? And can this *Event* be supposed *regularly* and *constantly* to appear, if not *miraculous*, without the Assistance of *Fraud* and *Imposture* to carry on the Cheat?—In like manner, the pretended *Cure* of a Person diseased,

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by the Touch of a *Relique*, or by any other superstitious Rite, might perhaps by chance, once or twice, appear to be a real Event: But could there constantly appear to be the like Event, through mere Superstition and Credulity, if there was no such real Event?—There must be Fraud and Imposture in the Case.

Mere Superstition and Credulity, therefore, though they may be supposed to account for the Credit of pretended Miracles in *after* Ages, and in Those Who are not the *Spectators*, and in a *few Instances*; yet are not sufficient to account for the *Origin* of such a *Number* of incredible Fictions, as are recorded of the *fourth* and following Ages; nor for the *Series* of *Success* with the *Populace*; but must have been the Effects of *Fraud* and *Imposture* somewhere.—The Author of the *Introductory Discourse* does not, in this Place, say *where*; nor any Thing here (whatever He may have said elsewhere) which can infer His Meaning to be, that this *Fraud* or *Imposture* was in the *Bishops* and *Clergy*; but may therefore (for any Thing He has here said) suppose the *Bishops* and *Clergy* to have credited them through Their *Superstition* and *Credulity*; and the *Fraud* and *Imposture* to have been in Others.

‘ Is every Man (says the *Observer*) a *Knave* or
‘ a *Cheat*, Who believes that there is *Vertue* in a
‘ *Charm* or an *Amulet*?’—No: but the *constant*
Use, and *Series* of *Credit*, which *Charms* and *Amu-*
lets obtained in several Ages, must be owing to

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the *Support*, which the Faith in such Kind of Things received, from the Artifice of *Imposture*, of *Knaves* and *Cheats* somewhere. Otherwise, How comes it to pass, that the *Reputation* of *Charms* and *Amulets* is not as great *now*, as *ever*? Can the Decline of it be imputed to any Thing, but the *ceasing* of that *Fraud* and *Imposture*, and the Power and Credit of those *Knaves* and *Cheats*, Who used to support and propagate such Superstition.

How does He know, (says the *Observer*) that the Bishops and Clergy did not believe them, *i. e.* the pretended Miracles?—Why, so far from saying here, that They did *not* believe any of them; He supposes that They might often be deluded so far, by Other People's Forgeries, as to take them for real Miracles*. This indeed the *Observer* does take notice of; but then He tells Us, that the Author only says This, 'when He is in a *better Mood*, and that This shews He *talks at random*¹; meaning, that This is *inconsistent* with calling them *mere Forgeries*, the Effects of Fraud and Imposture.—But how so? Are not *Other People's Forgeries* as much *mere Forgeries*, the Effects of Fraud and Imposture, as if they were the Frauds and Forgeries of the *Fathers*?—Aye, but He has gone farther, and said, that 'the Principal Fathers of the fourth Age, have affirmed as true, What They Themselves had either *forged*, or What They *knew* at least to be

¹ *Observ.* p. 14.

¹ *Observ.* p. 15.

* *Introd. Disc.* p. 37.

‘be forged.’ And This is inconsistent with supposing Them to be deluded with other People’s Forgeries.—True, it is so, in the same Instances; but not in different. Might They not be supposed to forge some Miracles Themselves, and to know some to be forged; and yet to be deluded with respect to others?—When the Observer has therefore shewn, that the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* has said, that *Other People’s* Forgeries, and *Their own* were the same; or that they were deluded by Others, in the Miracles which They forged Themselves, or knew to be forged; He will then have shewn that the Writer He opposes is inconsistent: But ’till He has done That, and is in a better Mood; it will be thought perhaps that He should take his own Reflection home, and be contented to be thought, for once, to talk at random.

WELL, but our Author has said, that ‘the principal Fathers of the fourth Age have affirmed as true, What They Themselves had either forged, or What They knew at least to be forged.’ And ‘the particular Argument (says the Observer) now under Consideration, bears with all its Force upon this Supposition.’—

The Argument here referr’d to is This.—‘When We reflect on that surprising Confidence and Security, with which the principal Fathers of this fourth Age have affirmed as true, What They Themselves had either forged, or What They

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knew

^m *Introd. Disc.* p. 36. *Observ.* p. 15.

ⁿ *Observ.* p. 16.

'knew at least to be forged; It is natural to
 'suspect, that so bold a Defiance of sacred Truth
 'could not be acquired, or become general at
 'once, but must have been carried gradually to
 'that Height, by Custom and the Example of
 'former Times, and a long Experience of What
 'the Credulity and Superstition of the Multitude
 'would bear'.—'But should it not (says the
 'Observer) have been *proved*, as well as *supposed*,
 'that these Fathers reported false Miracles, not
 'out of *Credulity*, but downright *Knavery*; not
 'as *believing* them to be *true*, but as *knowing* them
 'to be *forged*?—'Tis agreed, that this particu-
 lar Argument depends upon the Truth of the Sup-
 position, that the Fathers *either forged Miracles*
Themselves, or *knew them to be forged*; and 'tis ad-
 mitted also, that This *ought to be proved* (by such
 Kind of Proof as, in the Nature of the Thing, it
 will admit of) as well as *supposed*.—But then it does
 not follow, that it ought to be proved at Length
here, in the *Introductory Discourse*; which is, in
 its Nature, designed only to be an *Introduction* to a
larger Work; in which larger Work, if This be so
 proved, it will be sufficient. The *Observer* indeed
 was aware of This, and therefore says—'Per-
 'haps He expects We should wait for the Proof,
 'till His large Work comes out'.^a *Perhaps* indeed
 He may; and I do not think that He expects
 any Thing very unreasonable therein.

BUT

^a *Introd. Disc.* p. 36.^p *Observ.* p. 16.^a *Ibid.*

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‘ BUT then (says the *Observer*) in the mean
 ‘ Time, He must give up his *previous Argument*
 ‘ as a mere Impertinence.’—But why so?—The
 Design of an *Introductory*, or *previous Discourse*, is
 only to give a *general View*, of What the *Book it-*
self is to draw out in Form, and inforce by proper
 Arguments or Instances at Length. To do This
 in the *previous Discourse*, would be to turn the *In-*
troduction into the *Book itself*. The Author ob-
 viates all Objections of this Kind, by expressly
 acquainting Us with the *Intention* and *Design* of
 this *Introductory Discourse*; and that this Particular
 of the Fathers’ Conduct; namely, Their espousing
 and propagating false Miracles, which (He says)
 They either forged Themselves, or knew to be
 forged, is to be the *proper Business* of His *larger*
Work; ‘ In which (He tells Us) He shall endea-
 ‘ vour to evince, by particular Facts and Testi-
 ‘ monies, What this *general View* of the Question,
 ‘ here given, and the Reflections naturally arising
 ‘ from it, would *previously* dispose Us to *suspect*;
 ‘ that the pretended Miracles of the Primitive
 ‘ Church were all mere Fictions; which the pious
 ‘ and zealous Fathers, partly from a weak CREDU-
 ‘ lity, and partly, from *Reasons of Policy*; be-
 ‘ lieving *some* perhaps to be true, and knowing
 ‘ *all* of them to be useful, were induced to es-
 ‘ pouse and propagate, for the Support of a righ-
 ‘ teous Cause.’

THE *Introductory Discourse* is here declared to
 be (What, by the Nature of it, it should be) only

‘ *Observ.* p. 16.

‘ *Introd. Disc.* p. 41.

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a *general View* of the Question, and What may *previously dispose Us to suspect*, &c. The *Facts* and *Testimonies*, which are *particularly to evince it*, are to come after, in the *larger Work*, of which it will be the *proper*, and not in the *Introduction*, where it would have been the *improper Business*.—Why then must the Author give up His *previous Argument*, as a mere *Impertinence*? Would this Writer have had Him transcribed the *Book* into the *Preface*?—I don't know What the *Observer* may think, but I am apt to fancy, that the *Public* would have looked upon it to have been as *impertinent* in the Author to have done This, as in Any-body else to expect it.

BUT 'it ought (says the *Observer*) to have some 'Footing of its own to stand upon; Which it 'cannot have, if it takes *pro concessio*, the very Thing 'which the principal Evidence is to prove'.—If the *previous Argument* contains in it, *all that is requisite* to the *End* and *Purpose* it is *designed for*; then it will have *sufficient Footing of its own to stand upon*. Now, the *End* and *Design* of it is, professedly, only, and no more, than to give such a *general View* of the Question, and the *Reflections* naturally arising from that *general View*; as may be sufficient to *dispose Us previously to suspect*^u that the *Fathers* either forged *Miracles*, or knew them to be forged.—Consider now the *previous Argument* in this *Light*, and see whether it does not contain *all that is requisite to this End*.—The Author had before

^r *Observ.* p. 16.

^u See *Introd. Disc.* p. 41.

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before acquainted the Reader, that Mr. Dodwell, One of the most zealous Admirers of Primitive Antiquity, ¹ condemns the Miracles of the fourth Century, as generally forged and fabulous: for the Proof of which, He appeals to the monstrous Fictions, which St. *Abanastius*, St. *Jerom*, and St. *Gregory of Nyssa*, have related ²;—and that They, and St. *Epiphanius*, St. *Basil*, St. *Ambrose*, St. *Austin*, and St. *Chrysostom* have all severally recorded, and solemnly attested, a Number of Miracles, said to be wrought in Confirmation of some favourite Institutions of those Days, which, in the Judgment of All the learned and candid Protestants, are manifestly fictitious, and utterly incredible ³.—Now is this Account of the Fathers true, or is it not? If it be not, why does not the *Observer* contradict it? If it be true, then here are *Miracles forged*, and the *Fathers* of the fourth Century, Who (our Author says) had more Learning, more Judgment, and less Credulity than the earlier Fathers⁴, espousing and propagating them;—learned, judicious, and not the most credulous Fathers, espousing and propagating forged Miracles, ridiculous Stories, and incredible Fictions.—How is This to be reconciled? Why, unless We will suppose, that such learned and judicious Persons, and not the most Credulous, were yet, at the same Time, so absurdly credulous and superstitious, as to believe such manifest Fictions, and Stories utterly incredible; unless

¹ *Introd. Disc. p. 27.*

² *Introd. Disc. p. 30.*

³ *Vid. Introd. Disc. p. 37.*

unless We will suppose such an *Inconsistency* in Their Character, there must lie a *Presumption* at least, a *previous Suspicion*, that They either forged such Miracles Themselves, or knew them to be forged, and propagated them as useful, in support of Their Cause; mistaken as to the Lawfulness of such Conduct.—Are not here Considerations enough, to dispose Us *previously to suspect* This? And has not the *previous Argument* therefore all that is requisite in it, to answer the *End* it was designed for; and therefore *sufficient Footing of its own to stand upon*?—Is not this Account of *Fathers and Miracles* sufficient to rest the *previous Argument* upon, and to stay our Stomachs 'till the *larger Work* is published; in which, perhaps, We may have more than We shall be able to digest?—But however, it appears at present that the *Author* does not take His Opinion of the *Fathers pro concessio* in this Argument; but forms it upon a *rational Presumption* here, which is to be opened, and examined at large hereafter.

IV.

BUT there is an Objection which the *Observer* makes to the *Author's Argument*, which does indeed seem to carry some Force with it, at first hearing; though, if duly considered, does not really conclude any Thing against it.

THE *Observer* thus puts it:—‘ The Fathers of
‘ the fourth Century, with surprizing Confidence,
‘ report Miracles as done in Their Time which
‘ were

‘ were Impostures. But it is not natural to think,
 ‘ that They would have had this Assurance, if
 ‘ They had not had the Examples of former Times
 ‘ to convince Them how much the Credulity and
 ‘ Superstition of the Multitude would bear. There-
 ‘ fore the Miracles reported to have been done in
 ‘ those former Times, must be Impostures like-
 ‘ wise.’^a

BUT it is to be noted, that the *Introductory Discourse* does not conclude, that therefore the Miracles reported of the former Times *must be* Impostures likewise; but only, that *it is natural to suspect it*^a; which is a very different Thing: And therefore the Reader is desired to bear in Mind, that the *Introductory Discourse* does not give the Argument as a *direct Conclusive*, but only as a *presumptive* Argument; and consequently, that the *Observer* has misrepresented it.—This Remark will be of use presently. —Now let us hear His *Observation*.

‘ LET me ask this Reasoner (says the *Observer*)
 ‘ suppose it can be shewn, as it is very easy to be
 ‘ shewn, that the Fathers of the *second* and *third*
 ‘ Centuries have reported, as *He* will say *false*,
 ‘ Miracles as done in Their Times, with the same
 ‘ Confidence, that the Fathers of the fourth Cen-
 ‘ tury have reported them as done in Theirs;
 ‘ will it not follow by *His* Logic, that in like
 ‘ manner as the *fourth* Century was prepared to
 ‘ receive the Impostures of that Age, by the Im-
 ‘ postures

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^a Observ. p. 17.

^a Vid. *Introd. Disc.* p. 36.

'postures of the *second* and *third*; so the *second* and *third* Centuries were also prepared to admit 'the Impostures of those Ages, by the Impostures of the *first*^b'. — But in order to make this Question *pertinent*; the *Observer* must shew, not only that the Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries have reported *the false Miracles which They have reported*, with the same Confidence that the Fathers of the *fourth* Century have reported *the false Miracles which They have reported*; which may perhaps be very easy to shew, but comes not up to the Point: But He must shew also, in order to make the Confidence the *same* upon *the Whole*, so as to affect this Argument — He must shew, that the Miracles reported by the Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries are *as numerous, as absurd, as ridiculous and incredible* (which it is *not very easy to shew*) as those reported by the Fathers of the *fourth* Century. — 'Till the *Observer* has shewn *This*, He cannot say (at least He cannot *prove*) that the Fathers of the *second* and *third* Ages appear to have the *same Confidence*, upon *the Whole*, as Those of the *Fourth*: And therefore, such an Argument, from the *second* and *third* Ages, to the *first*; has not the same Foundation to proceed upon, as the Argument from the *fourth* Age, to the *second* and *third*.

IN the *fourth* Century, the Miracles reported are *so numerous and ridiculous, so ill attested, so manifestly fictitious and incredible*; that they prove, beyond Contradiction, that an Attempt to impose them upon the People, must suppose the Confidence and Security of the *Fathers* to have arisen to a sur-

^b *Observ.* p. 17, 18.

prizing

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prizing Heigth. This Heigth of Confidence and Security We cannot suppose the *Fathers* to have arrived at, or that They ventured upon such Practice, *all at once*; but that They proceeded gradually and took Time in making Their Advances; which *presumptively* infers *some Degree* of the like Practice of tampering with false Miracles, some Example in the Ages preceding; that the Attempt had been made by Their Predecessors; and that, from the Example of *former Fathers*, Who had found *Success* in Their Times, through the Superstition and Credulity of the Multitude, the *later Fathers* now ventured to *proceede farther*; Their Confidence arose to an *higher Degree*, as They observed, from such former Examples, What Superstition and Credulity in the People had born; on which Foundation They advanced farther and farther, 'till Their Confidence and Security arose to that surprizing Heigth, visible in the numerous and incredible Fictions of the *fourth Century*; Which, without thus supposing *some Degree* of the like Practice in the Ages preceding, is not to be accounted for.—And thus the false Miracles of the *fourth Age*, infer *presumptively* the false Miracles of the *second* and *third*.

BUT now the same way of Reasoning will not take place, from the *second* and *third Centuries*, to the *first*.

Whatever *later Writers* may have done, as *Ruffinus*, *Gregory of Tours*, *Metaphrastes*, *Cedrenus*, *Sigebertus*, *Nicephorus*, and Others, and per-

haps even *Eusebius*^c; We do not find the *Fathers Themselves* of the *second* or *third* Century, reporting such Miracles, neither as to Number, or Kind; nor laying Claim to such miraculous Powers; as We find in the Fathers of the *fourth*, and following Ages.

If *Origen*^d be frequently displaying upon the *πράξις*, visible among the Christians of His Time; We shall find that they are the Power of *Exorcism*, of *curing Diseases*, by the Imposition of Hands and Prayer, of *Prophecy*, or the like. The same may be said of *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Irenæus*, *Minutius Felix*, *Cyprian*, &c.—We do not hear, in those Ages, of the *daily Miracles* wrought by the *Reliques* of Martyrs, as *St. Chrysostom* reports of His Times^e; nor such Stories as He and *St. Austin*,

^c Nutat quandoq; illa [Fides scil.] Eusebianarum Narrationum, sæpè dubiis Testibus, sæpè Vulgi Rumoribus nixa: Quale illud de miraculosis Sanationibus, quæ fierent Cæsareæ Philippi, ex Usu *Herbæ* cujusdam, ad Pedes *Statuæ* Christo scilicet consecratæ succrescentis, nempe ὡς ἑλκῶν ut ferebant Hist. l. vii. c. xviii. Adde Historiolam de Asturio, c. xvii. præcedente, & id genus quasdam alias.—*F. Spanhem.* Introd. ad Chronol. & Hist. Sacr. Tom. i. p. 347.

THE Story which *Eusebius* relates of this *Asturius* is, that He brought up to the Top of the Water, and there made it float, the Carcass of a Victim which the Heathens used, at a certain Annual Ceremony, to throw into the Fountains which supplied the River *Jordan*; and which the *Devil* used, 'till that Time, to cause to disappear; but could never after repeat the Illusion.

^d Contra Celsum. passim.

^e —Τὰ καὶ ἐγένοντο ἡμῶν ὑπὸ τῶν μαρτύρων γινόμενα θαύματα. — *Chrysost.* Op. T. ii. p. 555. Ed. Bened.

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St. Austin, St. Ambrose, and Others (Writers of the fourth Century) have related. We do not hear, in the second or third Centuries, of the Sign of the Cross throwing open Gates, as St. Chrysostom relates^f; nor of Any-one being saved from drowning in a Shipwreck, by tying the Mysteries of the Sacrament about his Neck, as St. Ambrose reports^g.

—The Author of the *Examination* mentions the Cure performed by Oil, upon the Emperor *Septimius Severus*, by one *Proculus*, in the Beginning of the third Century; as the Story is told by *Tertullian*^b. The *Examiner* says, ‘It is very well worth Observation, that *Tertullian* in His Address to *Scapula*, the cruel President of *Afric*, insists much upon *Severus*’s Kindness to a Christian, Who had miraculously cured Him with the Sacred Oil. Now it cannot be supposed that *Tertullian* would have insisted upon this Miracle, had it not been a Fact certain beyond Dispute, and Which *Scapula* Himself was not unacquainted with; or at least What He might easily be made acquainted with. Because otherwise, the insisting on this Miracle might be very dangerous, or at least of no Useⁱ. —This Gentleman takes it for granted, that this Cure was miraculous, or performed by the Sacred Oil.—I know indeed that it is generally so taken^k: But *Tertullian* does not say so; Nor do

^f Τὸ τοῦ σημείου καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν πονηρῶν ἡρώδ, καὶ νῦν, διέγει ἀνίψας κακλισμῶδες. — Tom. vii. p. 552.

^g De excessu Satyri. L. i. §. 43, 44. p. 1125. Op. T. 2. Ed. Bened.

^b Ad Scap. c. iv.

ⁱ Mr. Comber’s Examination, p. 38.

^k Vid. Deylingii Observ. Sacr. Tom. iii. p. 485.

do His Words necessarily infer it.—‘ Ipse etiam
 ‘ Severus Pater Antonini, Christianorum memor
 ‘ fuit. Nam & *Proculum Christianum*, Qui Tor-
 ‘ pacion cognominabatur, Euhodiae Procuratorem,
 ‘ Qui Eum per Oleum aliquando curaverat, *requi-*
 ‘ *sivit*, & in Palatio suo habuit usque ad Mortem
 ‘ ejus’.—Where is any thing said of a *Miracle*,
 or *Sacred Oil*? It is well known that there were a
 Sort of Persons called *Iatraliptae*, Who used to
 perform Cures by means of Oils and *Unguentis*.
 This was a very ancient Method of Cure; and
 Oil is known to be of excellent Use in many Cases;
 and it has been thought that no more can be fairly
 concluded from the Words of *Tertullian*, than that
Proculus, Who might probably be One of this
 Sort of Physicians, had cured the Emperor in this
 manner; on which Account He was afterwards,
 though then a *Christian*, sent for to Court, and
 from thenceforward entertained in the Palace by
Severus; either out of Gratitude, or for the Sake
 of this medicinal Art¹.—‘ *Proculum Christianum*,
 ‘ Qui Eum aliquando curaverat, *requisivit*’.—It
 does not appear therefore, that *Tertullian* did *insist*
 on This as a *Miracle*; but only as a Reason of
Severus’s taking notice of *Proculus*, though a *Chri-*
stian. Nor does it appear but that *Proculus*
 might have performed this Cure before He was a
 Christian: But if it was performed when He was
 a Christian, it does not follow that the Cure must
 have been *miraculous*; nor can it be proved (as I
 have

¹ Conf. *Van Dale*. Antiq. Dissert. viii. c. 8.

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have shewn) from *Tertullian's Words*, that He intended to relate it as such.—But Whatever was the Opinion and Practice in regard to *Unction* with the *Sacred Oil*, in *Tertullian's Time*; We do not hear, in those Days, of Persons restored from *Death to Life*, by the Oil of the *Martyrs' Lamps*; as *St. Austin* tells Us there were in the *fourth Century* ^m.

Much less, do We hear of such incredible Fictions, as adorn the Writings of the *fifth* and *sixth* Centuries, particularly the *Dialogues* under the Name of *Gregory the Great*; of Persons restored to Sight and Life, by the Touch of *Italian Monks*; of Their *walking upon Water*; of *Rivers changing their Course*, and following Them into new Channels, which They traced out to them; of Water rising up almost to the *Roofs of Churches*, without entering the Doors, which yet at the same Time stood open; and of Pieces of Gold drop from Heaven ⁿ. These, with numberless other Stories of the like Stamp, which You may read in this Author, as also in *Evagrius*, and *Gregory of Tours*, are sufficient to shew the Character and Genius of these Ages ^o.

Two

^m De Civit. Dei. L. 22. C. viii. §. 18.

ⁿ Vid. Introd. Disc. p. 32.

^o *Gregorii Turonensis Historiis*, adde Narrationes bene multas apud *Evagrium*—et *Dialogos* sub *Gregorii M. Nomine*, de Vita et Miraculis Sanctorum—atque intelliges Conditionem Temporum, investamque tum in Ecclesiam, ut passim Barbariem, sic Superstitionem quandoque Gentili scediorum.—F. Spabem. Introd. &c. Tom. I. p. 576.

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Two most ridiculous Stories there are, related of the *third* Century. That of the *Seven Sleepers*, Who are said to have slept in a Cave from the Time of *Decius*, to *Theodosius junior*, about two hundred Years; and That of the *British Ursula*, with Her *eleven thousand Virgins*, Who suffered Martyrdom for Their Faith and Virginity, among the *Ubii* in *Germany*.

BUT as to the former, the Account is not given by any contemporary Writers, Who are All silent; and the First Who tells the Story is *Gregory of Tours*, in the *Sixth* Century.—A Man of no great Judgment or Sagacity^p.

As to the other Story, the Legendary Writers, from Whom the Account comes, contradict One Another as to the *Date* of the Transaction; Some referring it to the *fourth*, Others to the *fifth* Century; nor is there a greater Agreement among Them in the other Circumstances of the Story^q. — 'Tis pleasant to hear *Baronius* telling Us, *deperditam esse earum Virginum veram germanamque Historiam*.

NUMEROUS indeed are the *Miracles* reported of *Gregory of Neocæsarea* (commonly called *Thaumaturgus*) of the *third* Century: But they stand chiefly upon the Credit of the two Brothers, *Basil* and *Gregory*

^p Vir erat pro Sæculo, quo vixit, non ineruditus: Sed in Quo Judicium et Acumen non immerito desideres.—*Cav. Hist. Liter. Vol. I. p. 535.*

The Character given him by *Hilduinus* the *Abbat* of the ninth Century is.—*Parcendum est simplicitati viri religiosi; Qui multa aliter, quam se veritas habeat, æstimans, non Calliditatis astu, sed Benignitatis ac Simplicitatis Voto, Literis commendavit.*—*Epist. ad Ludov. Imp.*

^q Vid. *F. Spanhem. Introd. &c. Tom. 1. p. 349.*

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Gregory Nyssen, of the *fourth* Century, Who had them (Dr. Cave says) from Their Grandmother^r. —I need make no Remark therefore upon *what Sort of Credit* these Miracles are referred to the *third* Century.

THOUGH *some Degree of Confidence* therefore, and a *Degree* of the like Practice of *falsly claiming Miraculous Powers*, be supposed in the *second* and *third* Centuries; yet This will not infer the like Practice in the Ages before them; or that the Miracles of the *first* Age were *Impostures* also; as the *Impostures* of the *fourth* Age have been shewn to infer the *Impostures* of the *second* and *third*: Because, the Argument drawn from the Character *proper* to the *fourth*, and succeeding Ages, *ceases* in the *second* and *third*, and therefore reaches not to those above them.

THE *Nature*, and *Number* of the Miracles really recorded by the Writers of the *second* and *third* Centuries, are such as, though supposed to be *Impostures*, it may be thought that the *Fathers* of those Ages might venture upon, in *Imitation* of the *true* Miracles of the *first* Age; and that the *Confidence* of the *Fathers* herein, is no greater, than what may be *consistent* with supposing the Practice to have been then *in it's Infancy*; and such as may be sufficiently accounted for, *admitting* the Miracles of the *first*, or Apostolic Age, to have been (as they undoubtedly were) *true* and *genuine*; which cannot be said of that *high Degree* of Confidence and Security, which appeared in the *Fathers* of the *fourth*,
K and

and succeeding Ages, by Their patronizing such a *Number of ridiculous, incredible Fictions*, as We find recorded, and vouched, by the Writers of *those Times* respectively.

TRUE Miracles, in the Apostolic Age, might give a Foundation for *imitating* them in the next : But *true Miracles* in any Age, can never afford a Foundation sufficient for any Person's presuming, or venturing, to propagate such a *Number of absurd and monstrous Stories*, as We read in the Authors of the *fourth Century*, and downwards ; an *Height of Confidence and Security*, which must suppose *some Degree* of the like in the Ages *before* them.—The *Origin* of this Practice must have been somewhere ; and We have Reason to think that it could not have been in the *fourth Century*, because in *that* Age the Practice was as it were at *Maturity* : But it does not therefore follow, that the *Origin* could not have been in the *second Century*, when the Practice was *not* at *Maturity*.—The *Observer's* Consequence therefore, ' that the same Way of reasoning will hold from the *second* and *third* Ages, ' to the *first* ; which the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* makes use of from the *fourth* Age, ' to the *second* and *third* ;' falls to the Ground : And This *Observation*, which He seems to think of such Force as to overturn the present Argument, the Reader, I believe, sees by this Time, has no great Matter in it.—It may indeed be as *plausibly said*, as some Things have been before it : Which may serve for an Example to Us, that *plausible Things*, though coming from the Pens of

eminent

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eminent Writers, may sometimes happen, nevertheless, to be attended with the Misfortune, of being *very little to the Purpose.*

If it be said, that the *high Degree* of *Superstition* and *Credulity* in the *Multitude* of the *fourth* Age, may account for the *high Degree* of *Confidence* and *Security* in the *Fathers* of that Age; without supposing any Thing of the like in the Ages preceding; I answer—

WHATEVER Degree of *Credulity* and *Superstition* be supposed in the *Multitude* of the *fourth* Century; the *Fathers* could not know, from that Age, What it was, nor how much it would bear, 'till *They had tried it*: But it is not reasonable to suppose, that *They* would have ventured to have begun their Practice upon it, and tried it, as it were at once, with such a *Number* of *incredible Fictions*; unless *They* had *some Authority* to venture so far, from *Something* of the like Practice having been already begun in former Ages; which *They* might reasonably presume would take off the Novelty of the Thing; and the *Taste* of the *miraculous*, which from Time to Time the People had been accustomed to, from the *second*, through the *third* Century, might be supposed to have prepared the *Stomachs* of the *fourth*, for the more easy swallowing, What *They* now therefore thought *They* might venture to dose them with. So that, tho' a *high Degree* of *Superstition* and *Credulity* in the *Multitude* of the *fourth* Century, may account for the *Confidence* and *Security* of the *Fathers*, in reporting false Miracles, arising at Length to a

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greater Heighth than they otherwise might have done; yet We cannot from thence alone account for Their venturing to practice upon the *fourth* Age, with that *surprising Degree* of Confidence and Security, *from the Beginning*, in the incredible Fictions They reported; unless We also suppose some *Precedent* or *Example* of the like Practice in the *Ages before*: Because They could not know What the *high Degree* of *Superstition* and *Credulity* in *this* Age would bear; if They had not first had the *surprising Degree* of Confidence to try it. This therefore must have been arrived at *gradually*, and from the Examples and Precedents of the Trade of Miracle-making, though in a lower Degree, in the foregoing Centuries of the Church.

BUT let it be also farther considered, that if *Superstition* and *Credulity* were at *so great a Heighth*, as indeed they were, throughout the *fourth* Century; then this *high Degree* of them in the *fourth* Century, must suppose *some Degree* of both in the *Ages preceding*; And That being a good Ground for the Fathers of those Ages to work upon, no doubt but They took Care to cultivate it as much as it would bear; and so the *high Degree* of *Superstition* and *Credulity* in the *Populace* of the *fourth* Century, will strengthen the Argument drawn from the *high Degree* of Confidence and Security in the *Fathers* of that Age, for the Impositions and false Miracles of the *second* and *third* Centuries.

BUT neither here again will the like way of arguing hold, from the *second* and *third* Age to the *first*: Because the *Superstition* and *Credulity* of the
second

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second and third Ages were not in so high a Degree, (in the *Multitude*, whatever they were in the *Fathers*) as to infer the like in the Age before them, as was the Case of the *fourth Century*.

I know that the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* supposes *Credulity* to be Part of the distinguishing Character of the early Ages after the Apostles; and that even the *Fathers* of those Ages were more credulous than Those of The fourth. p. 42. 37. But I must own, it seems to me more reasonable to suppose, that in the *second and third Age*, the Converts to a Religion, as yet new and unsettled, tho' They might be so credulous as to admit some Fictions and Impositions, some extraordinary Claims to Miraculous Powers; yet were at first more cautious, and upon Their Guard, than to give Credit to the most ridiculous and monstrous Stories; If their Teachers had ventured, either from *Credulity* or *Fraud*, to have proposed such to them: And therefore that the State of *Credulity*, in the *Multitude*, in the *second and third Ages*, was not in that Degree, as to be inconsistent with supposing it then in its *Beginning*; and so not to infer any Thing of the Age before it, the Age of *Christ* and His *Apostles*. But as the Religion took deeper Root in the Minds of the People, and as They gave Themselves up more and more, implicitly, to the Guidance of their Teachers; They ran by Degrees into the other Extreme of *Credulity* and *Superstition*; which in the *fourth Century* We find at such a Height, as plainly to shew that the *Beginning* of them could not be in that Age; but must have been

been growing by Degrees, and infer therefore some Degree of the like, in the Ages before. From hence downwards We still find the same Qualities increasing, 'till the Church was at last clouded over with all the *Superstition* of the *Church of Rome*; which continued, 'till the *Reformation* struck a new Light into Men's Minds, and brought Them again to their sober Senses; and (tho' Some may pay perhaps too great a Veneration to the Fathers, yet upon the whole) I wish We are not now going on to the next Stage of *Libertinism*, and so running the Circle into the *Infidelity* again of the first Ages.

It appears therefore, by What has been said, that the *Observer* is mistaken in imagining that the same Method of arguing, which the *Introductory Discourse* employs, to infer the false Miracles of the second and third Ages, from those of the fourth; will hold equally from the second and third Ages, to the first.—I need not repeat.—The Reader sees that the Character proper to the fourth and succeeding Ages, which infers the false Miracles of the second and third; is not applicable to these Centuries, and therefore affects not the Age above them. But Now,

SECONDLY,—Let the Reader recollect, What I mention'd at the Entrance of this Head, viz. that the Argument used by the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*, is not designed to be a direct conclusive, but only a presumptive Argument.

AND now, to use the *Observer's* Words in another Place — 'a Presumption, however, must give Way to plain Evidence on the other Side,
' if

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‘ if such Evidence should be found :’ — To this We agree, and notwithstanding this Argument, from the high Degree of Confidence and Security in the Fathers of the *fourth* Age, in forging, or reporting Miracles knowing them to be forged, will infer, *presumptively*, some Degree of the like Practice in the *second* and *third* Ages ; yet We admit, that, if there should be found *plain Evidence* notwithstanding, for the Truth of the Miracles reported in the *second* and *third* Ages ; then, this *Presumption* must give way to the *plain Evidence*, and the *Truth* of such Miracles must be admitted. — But the Case is, that no such plain Evidence doth appear, even for the Miracles of the *second* and *third* Centuries ; and therefore the *Presumptive* Argument stands good against them.

BUT with Regard to the *first* Century, or *Apostolic* Age ; though We should suppose that the Degree of Confidence (whatever it was) in forging, or reporting Miracles, knowing them to be forged, in the *second* and *third* Centuries, was otherwise sufficient, in like Manner, to infer *presumptively* something of the like Practice in that first Age ; yet, since it is agreed that a *presumptive* Argument must give Way to *plain Evidence* ; and it being also agreed, that there is such plain Evidence for the Truth of the *Apostolic* Miracles ; here the *presumptive* Argument, which had force before, ceases. — The Case is not the same in the Miracles of the *first*, and those of the *second* and *third* Ages. The former stand upon good Evidence ;

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dence; the *latter*, upon Evidence not to be depended on.—Therefore, though a *presumptive* Argument be good against the one, it does not follow that it must be equally good against the other.—If We were even to suppose *as great a Degree* of Confidence and Security in the *Falshers*, and *as great a Degree* of Superstition and Credulity in the *Multitude*, of the *second* and *third* Centuries, as We suppose in Those of the *fourth*; Yet still, a *Presumption* from thence will not lie against the *plain Evidence*, which is supposed for the Truth of the Miracles of the *first* Age; As it lies from the *fourth* Age against the *second* and *third*, where *no such plain Evidence* is supposed—Much less will the *Presumption* lie from that *lesser Degree* of the afore-said Qualities, which We have justly supposed in the Character of the *second* and *third* Ages.—And therefore by this Time, I believe, that the unprejudiced Reader sees how little Force there is in the *Observer's* formidable Exception to the Argument of the *Introductory Discourse*; And that there is no manner of Consequence, that because the *great Trade* of false Miracles in the *fourth* Century, will infer, *presumptively*, something of the like Kind in the *second* and *third*, where there is no *sufficient Evidence* of the Truth of the Miracles reported in those Ages; therefore the false Miracles of those *second* and *third* Ages, will infer the Falshood of the Miracles of the *first* Age, which stand upon *plain* and *undoubted Evidence*.

THE *Observer* says——‘ If the Author can
‘ see any Distinction in the two Cases, I desire Him

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‘ to shew What it is. If there is none, He has
‘ but *one* Choice in the Conclusion. He must re-
‘ nounce His Argument, or He must reject the
‘ Gospel, Which, after having stood the Test of
‘ so many Ages, I trust is not to be shaken by
‘ better Arguments than This.’—Had this for-
midable Sentence stood at the Head of His *Obser-*
vation; How must it have terrified the Author of
the *Introductory Discourse*, with the Apprehension
of What might follow after!—‘ He has but one
‘ Choice in the Conclusion.—He must renounce
‘ His Argument, or He must reject the Gospel!’
But it is a Comfort, that it comes not ‘till the *Ob-*
*serv**ation* has appeared at full Length, and our
Author haply escaped from the Alternative, to
Which the *Observer* imagined He had reduced Him.
—It turns out, that *Christianity is safe*; and
yet that the *Argument stands good*; Neither of
which, I believe, are to be *shaken* by *better Argu-*
ments than have yet appeared against them. But
the next *Observation*, is an *Observation* indeed!—
‘ If the Argument proves any Thing, it is This;
‘ that false Miracles never could have had a *Be-*
‘ *ginning* in any Age; For to say that they had a
‘ *Beginning*, supposes a Period antecedently to
‘ Which they were *not*; Which yet is impossible to
‘ be supposed, if there is no Reason in supposing
‘ that an Impostor should give out Reports of
‘ such Miracles, unless He has had the Ex-
‘ ample of former Times, to shew Him how
‘ much the Credulity and Superstition of the Mul-

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titude

‘titude will bear.” — But the Argument does not proceed upon a Supposition (as here represented) that there is no Reason to think an Impostor would report false Miracles ; that there could not be *any* reporting false Miracles, any such Confidence at all in one Age, unless there had been the same in the preceding ; but that there could not be such surprising Confidence and Security, such an *high Degree* of these, as We see there was in one Age, without Something of the like Kind preparatory in the Age before ; Because it is as absurd to suppose they could arrive at that Height *all at once*, without having been, in *some Degree*, in the *Ages before* ; as it would be to suppose any Person to have arrived at *Manhood*, without ever having been a *Child*. — But will the Argument hold, that therefore We cannot suppose His *Childhood* to have had a *Beginning* ? — ‘*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*,’ is an old Proverb, and an older Truth : No Man ever arrived at the *biggest Degree* of Infamy or Wickedness *at once* : But does it therefore follow, that His Wickedness never had *any Beginning* at all ? — The present Perfection of Arts and Sciences, supposes that Arts and Sciences were in *some Degree* in *Times preceding*, and that their present *Improvement* is owing to the *Examples* in former Ages. — But now, to argue as the *Observer* does — ‘Arts and Sciences therefore could never have a *Beginning* in *any Age* ; For to say they had a *Beginning* supposes a Period antecedent to Which they were *not* ; Which yet is impossible to be supposed, if there

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‘ there be no Reason to expect, that there
‘ would have been any Attempt to improve them,
‘ unless they had the Example of *former Times*.’
And so the *Observer’s* notable Argument,
if it prove any Thing against the *Principle* of
the *Introductory Discourse*, will prove equally
against the *Origin* of *Arts and Sciences*; And
therefore I believe I may be excused from having
any farther Concern with it.—I have taken the
Freedom of borrowing it for a Moment, and now
return it to Him again safe and sound; and (as
Mr. Boyle told Dr. Bentley upon a like Occasion)
with a Promise never to use it again.

‘ There is Something curious (says He) in the
‘ Author’s Argument ’.—The Reader, I be-
lieve, will think that there is Something quite *as*
curious in the *Answer* to it. —The *Argument* says,
that the *surprizing Degree* of Confidence in the
fourth Century, supposes the Beginning of it not
to have been in *that Age*.——The *Answer* says,
that *therefore*, any Degree of it in any Age, sup-
poses that it had *no Beginning at all*: That is; Be-
cause the Cupola of St. Paul’s, supposes the Foun-
dation-Stone; therefore the *Foundation-Stone* sup-
poses, that there was *no Foundation at all*.——

V.

THE next Passage quoted from the *Introductory*
Discourse, for the *Observer’s* Animadversion, is
This. ‘ If We compare the principal Fathers of

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the fourth, with Those of the earlier Ages; We shall observe the same Characters of Zeal and Piety in Them All; but more Learning, more Judgment, and less Credulity in the later Fathers. If These then be found, either to have forged Miracles, &c.—It will naturally excite in Us the same Suspicion of Their Predecessors; Who, in the same Cause, and with the same Zeal, were less learned, and more credulous, and in greater Need of such Arts, for Their Defence and Security *.

THE Author of the *Introductory Discourse* had before called the Report which the Fathers of the fourth Century have made, of Miracles Which They either forged Themselves, or knew to be forged, a *bold Defiance of Sacred Truth*¹; yet here He says, that there was the same Character of Piety in Them All.—The Charge therefore brought against the Author by the *Observer*, is,—‘I cannot easily understand how Piety, and a bold Defiance of Sacred Truth can stand together in the same Character’.

WHETHER the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* may, or may not, be solicitous about the Piety of these Fathers; and Whatever the *Observer* can, or cannot, easily understand; What the *Former* hath said, concerning the Fathers’ Report of false Miracles as true, Which, ’tis supposed, They either forged, or knew to be forged; is not so inconsistent

* *Observ.* p. 18. *Introduct. Disc.* p. 37.

¹ *Introduct. Disc.* p. 36.

² *Observ.* p. 18.

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consistent with the Character of *Piety*, as it may at first View appear to be.

THE Author of the *Introductory Discourse* is perhaps too strong in His Expression, in calling this Practice of the *Fathers* (supposing it so) a *bold Defiance of Sacred Truth*; since it might procede from *Ignorance* and *Mistake* as to the Innocence and Lawfulness of it; and so, tho' a *Contradiction* of Truth, yet not, properly, a *Defiance* of Truth; much less a *bold Defiance*: But, as all Falshood, every *known* Deviation from Truth, may be called, so far, and as such, (tho', if proceeding from *Mistake* as to the *Lawfulness* of it in some particular Cases, it will be in an *improper* Sense) a *Defiance of Sacred Truth*; in this Sense, to forge Miracles, or to report them as true, knowing them to be forged, is a Deviation from, and, *so far*, a *Defiance of Sacred Truth*.—Now I admit also, that a *Defiance of Sacred Truth in general*, cannot stand with the Character of *Piety in general*; or that a *Defiance of Sacred Truth in general*, cannot easily stand with *Piety* in a *particular Instance*: But it is not so clear, that *such a Deviation from Sacred Truth* (as the Case in question) in *one single Practice*, cannot stand, either with *Piety in general*, or with *Piety in other Instances*, or even in *that very same Instance*.

WHETHER these Fathers did, or did not, forge some Miracles; or report them as true, knowing them to be forged; I do not take upon Me to determine. It is not impossible that the Whole might be owing to Their Credulity, Superstition, and an over-

over-heated Zeal ; though I must confess, it is difficult to reconcile This, with the Character of *Learning, Prudence, and Judgment*. And, considering the Ridiculousness, and Incredibility of many of the Stories, a *Presumption* seems to lie against Them, as not wholly ignorant of the Fraud. But, supposing it can be proved, that They were guilty of this Practice ; I cannot think This to be absolutely *irreconcilable* with Their Character of *Piety*.

FOR supposing the Fathers, here accused, to have had deservedly the *general Character* of *pious, good Men* ; does the *Observer* think it difficult to suppose, that *pious* and *good Men* may be *mistaken* ?—The *Fathers* were not very *distinguishing Casuists*, nor have They performed any great Matters in *Moral Theology*.—The Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries, being chiefly engaged with *Jews* and *Gentiles* on the one hand, and with *Heretics* on the other ; it is no Wonder that They have not written much, professedly, upon this Subject ; and where They have occasionally delivered any Thing of this Kind, They have not been free from *Error* and *Mistake*.—The Fathers of the *fourth* and *fifth* Centuries, will indeed furnish Us with more on this Topic ; But have yet left Nothing *accurate*, or *clear* upon the Subject, or reduced into any allowed *System* ; nor, in What They have done, were They without Their *Mistakes* and *Blemishes*, as might be easily shewn.—In the Writings of the *sixth*, and following Ages, the Decrease of *Purity* in *Doctrine*, as well as in *Learning*,

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Learning, is very visible, particularly in those of the *Schoolmen*; nor did *Moral Divinity* appear with any Advantage, 'till since the *Reformation*. Mr. *Barbeyrac*, in the *Preface* to his *French Edition* of *Puffendorf de Jure Natur. et Gent.* wherein He hath treated largely of the *Moral Theology of the Fathers*, hath noted Their *Errors*, and sometimes perhaps too severely^a; in which indeed He is opposed by *Remigius Ceillier*^b: But *Buddeus*, a moderate Man, agrees with *Barbeyrac* in the main Point, viz. that the *Fathers*, as in other Things, so also in Their *Moral Theology*, were not free from *Errors*^c; nor have given us any methodical, clear, or accurate System of *Morals*^d.

Is it strange then to suppose, that Some of the *Fathers* in the *Primitive Ages*, in these Circumstances, when *Moral Theology* was reduced to no regular, allowed System, nor any Thing clearly and accurately settled upon the Subject, might (tho' ever so good and pious) mistake as to the *Lawfulness* of the Practice under Consideration?—Is it strange to suppose that, in Support of a Religion in Which They were well assured of the Truth,

^a §. IX. seq.

^b Apologie de la Morale des Peres de l'Eglise, contre les injustes Accusations du Sieur Jean Barbeyrac. Paris. 1718. 4to.

^c Ego quidem in eo, quod Caput Causæ est, cum *Barbeyracio*, Viro eruditissimo, consentio, Patres, ut in aliis, ita et in *Doctrina morali*, *Navorum* non esse expertes; lubensque fateor, multa melius, rectiusque hodie tradi posse, traditaque esse, quam ab *Eis* factum.—*Isagog. ad Theolog.* Tom. 1. p. 554. Edit. Lips. 1730.

^d Lubens fateor, anteaque fassus sum, eam, quæ in *Methodo tractandi* hodie observari solet, *ἀνεύθυναι* a Patribus expectari non posse.—*Ibid.* p. 556. Vide etiam, p. 559. 562.

Truth, They might *mistake* as to the *Innocence* of the *Means* They might make Use of in such Support ; and so might venture to relate as true, Miracles Which They might suspect, or know to be false ; believing, that, as they appeared to be in themselves innocent, were not *injuriously deceitful* (Which is the noxious Composition of a *Lie*,) and were at the same Time (as They thought) *useful* in the Support and Propagation of a Religion Which They knew to be divine ; They might innocently venture upon such a Practice ? They were Men, pious *in general* ; pious in the Work of supporting and spreading Christianity, Which They knew to be true ; pious even in this particular Instance ; *pious* in the *End*, though They might be *mistaken* as to the *Innocence* and *Lawfulness* of the *Means* They used.—Such Conduct may indeed impeach Them of *Ignorance*, but not of *Impiety*.—I do not undertake to shew, that Their Ignorance and Mistake (supposing Them guilty of the Charge) will *justify* the *Rectitude* of Their *Conduct* ; But that they may yet be so far pleaded in *Excuse*, as to clear Them from *Impiety* therein.

IN that famous trite Case, of an innocent Man pursued by a Murderer, and a Traveller, knowing the Intent, *misdirecting* or *misinforming* the Pursuer—I would ask, is not the *Falseness* in this Case, as such, and in the improper Sense before-mentioned, a *Defiance of Sacred Truth* ? But is the *misdirecting* Traveller guilty, for that Reason, of *Impiety* therein ?—I do not mention this Falseness, as parallel in its *Nature*, with That of *forging a Miracle*, or relating a Miracle

as true, knowing it to be forged ; But as parallel so far only ; as to shew that *Piety*, and a *Defiance* of, or Deviation from *Sacred Truth*, are not, in all Cases, incompatible to the same Character : And thus far the two Cases are parallel ; since the *Defiance* of *Sacred Truth*, is, as such, (as a known Deviation from, therefore, in the improper Sense before-mentioned, a *Defiance* of, Truth) equal in both Cases.

If the *Observer* does not like this Instance, I will give Him another.—He tells Us, that *Hefychius*, a holy Man, ventured His Life to steal the Body of *Hilarion* the Monk, from the Place where it had been buried.—That the *Observer*, and Dr. *Claget* look upon This to have been a Crime in *Hefychius*, is plain from the Quotation from Dr. *Claget*, adopted by the *Observer* ; viz. that ‘ God did not intend, by the Miracles done, if any were done, to demonstrate the Clearness of *Hefychius*.’ And indeed, it was always looked upon, both by *Heathens* and *Christians*, as a very great Crime, and Impiety, to disturb, on any Account, the Ashes of the Dead ; against Which the Severity of the old *Roman Laws* was remarkable ; and continued so, for the most part, under the Christian Emperors. And as to the Plea of taking away the Bodies of the Dead, to preserve them as Reliques ; This was so far from justifying such Violation ; that the very Thing itself was

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* *Observ.* p. 11.

† *Ibid.* p. 12.

‡ *Vid. Bingham. Orig. Eccles. B. xxiii. C. iv. Sect. 1. 2.*

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prohibitedⁿ; and instead of being esteemed as any Mark of *Holiness*; It was then looked upon as no better than a *Sacrilegious Robbing of Graves*ⁱ, and a *Disturbance* of those Reliques, Which ought to be permitted to lie quiet in their last Retreat.—

—parce Sepulto !

Parce pias scelerare Manus !

Æneid. III.

WELL then, *Hefychius*, a holy Man, stole the Body of *Hilarion* out of His Grave :—And when the *Observer* will let Us into the Secret, how He accounts for the Consistency of the Character of *Hefychius*; He will help Us out in accounting for That of the *Fathers*², in the last Article of His Charge against Them.—

VI.

NOR can I see, (says the *Observer*) sufficient Ground to say, that the *Fathers* of the second and third Centuries were more credulous than the *Fathers* of the fourth. But This I see, that Those who are thus persuaded, may as easily fancy that the *Fathers* of the first Century were more credulous than All of Them; and the Inferences Which may be drawn from thence in Derogation of the Authority of the Miracles, reported

ⁿ *Humatum Corpus Nemo ad alium Locum transferat, Nemo Martyrem distrahat, Nemo mercetur.—Ced. Tb. L. 9. Tit. 7. de Sepulchris violat. Leg. 7.*

ⁱ *Bing. Orig. Eccles. B. xxiii. C. iv. Sect. 7.*

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• ported to have been wrought by *Christ* and His
• *Apostles*, are very obvious*.

THIS Gentleman may be better skill'd in *draw-
ing Inferences*, than I pretend to be ; But sometimes,
I think, He attempts to draw Inferences, Which
are a little too stubborn to follow.—Whether the
Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries were, or
were not, *more credulous* than Those of the *fourth*,
I will not here enquire : But I am not quite so
clear-sighted as to see, (What the *Observer* sees)
that We may as easily fancy that the *Fathers* of
the *first* Century were *more credulous* than All the
succeeding *Fathers* ; as easily fancy This, as that
the *Fathers* of the *second* and *third* Centuries, were
more Credulous than the *Fathers* of the *fourth* ; or
that any *Inferences* can be drawn here, in Derogation
from the Authority of the Miracles of *Christ* and
His *Apostles*.

I WOULD ask Him—Do the Miracles of the
first Age of the Church, of *Christ* and His *Apo-
stles*, stand upon *no better Evidence* than the Mira-
cles of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth* Centuries ?—
If they do not, then indeed there may be room
for the *Observer's* as easily fancying, that All the
Fathers were credulous alike. But This, I sup-
pose, He will not venture to assert.—If the Mi-
racles of *Christ* and His *Apostles*, on the contrary,
do stand upon *better Evidence* than the Miracles
of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth* Centuries ; then,
Nothing can be infer'd in Derogation from the
Authority of the former, by any Thing which

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* *Observ.* p. 18.

may be said of the *latter*.—Now This is the Case.—The Miracles of *Christ* and His *Apostles*, stand upon *unexceptionable Evidence*, upon Evidence admitted on both Sides to be sufficient, and superior to any supposeable *Credulity* in that Age. Therefore,

First. It does not follow, that We may as easily fancy the Writers of the *first* Age, Who report Miracles which, We agree, stand upon *unexceptionable Evidence*, to be more credulous than All Those Who report Miracles which do not stand upon such Evidence; though, among Those Who report Miracles which do not stand upon such Evidence, We may have Reason for supposing one Century more credulous than another.

Secondly. THEREFORE, although the *Fathers* of the *second* and *third* Centuries, be supposed more credulous than Those of the *fourth*, Who All report Miracles, Which, by Those Who suppose This, are not thought to stand upon sufficient Evidence; it does not follow, that They may as easily fancy that the Writers of the *first* Age, Whose Authority, and the Evidence of Whose Miracles are, on both Sides, supposed *unexceptionable*, were more credulous than All the Others.

THE Observer then either must say, that the Miracles of *Christ* and His *Apostles* stand upon no better Evidence, or Authority than, and are of the same Kind and Nature as, those of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth* Centuries:—Or else He must admit, in Contradiction to What He has asserted, that it is not as easy to fancy, that the Fathers of the *first* Age of the Church, were more credulous than

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than Those of the *second, third, and fourth* Centuries; as that the Fathers of the *second and third* Centuries, were *more credulous* than Those of the *fourth*: And must admit, that it does not follow, that any *Inferences* may be drawn in Derogation from the *Authority* of the *Miracles* of *Christ* and His *Apostles*, Which stand upon *Evidence* admitted as *sufficient* on *both* Sides; because the *Authority* of the *Miracles* of the *second, third, and fourth* Centuries are affected by the *Credulity* of those Ages.

THE *Observer*, in another Place, says—‘ There is a great Difference between the Miracles wrought by *Christ* and His *Apostles*, and the Miracles of later Ages; as in Point of Importance, so also in Point of Evidence¹.’ — Is there so? Why then, if there is so great a *Difference*, in Point of *Evidence*; how will it follow, that any Thing said in Derogation from the *latter*, must therefore affect the *former*? — So again He owns that — ‘ say the very worst you can say—that there is not so much as *one* Miracle upon Record since the Days of the *Apostles*, that is sufficiently attested; What has *Christianity* to do with this? Nothing; For *Christianity* stands not upon *new* Miracles, but upon the *old* ones^m.’ — If *Christianity* has *nothing to do* with the Question, ‘ whether there were, or were not, any *one* Miracle after the Days of the *Apostles*;’ can any Thing said in Derogation from the Miracles of the *Ages* succeeding, bear hard upon the Miracles of the *Apostles*, with Which, ’tis owned, they have *nothing to do*? — Yes, says

¹ *Observ.* p. 30.

^m *Observ.* p. 32.

says He; 'Because We may suppose Them more credulous than All the rest.' — We may suppose Them? — Why? have We the same, or as good Reason? — Will the *Observer* say We have? — If not, where is His Consequence? — Christianity (He owns) stands not upon *new* Miracles, but the *old*. — If so, then discrediting the *new*, does not affect Christianity, Which stands *not* upon the *new* Miracles, but the *old*, Which are admitted, on both Sides, to be founded upon *much better Evidence* than the *new*, superior to any supposeable Credulity in the first Age.

WHAT then is become of the *Observer's Observation*? — 'They, Who suppose that the Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries were more credulous than the Fathers of the *fourth*, may as easily fancy that the Fathers of the *first* Age were more credulous than All of Them' — Which can stand only upon this Assertion, that the Writers of the *second*, *third*, *fourth*, and *first* Age, are All of equal Credit, Character, and Authority; and that the Miracles of the *first* Age, of Christ and His Apostles, have no better Evidence, than the Miracles of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth* Centuries — Which He himself contradicts (and therefore contradicts Himself) when He says, that *there is a great Difference between them, in point of Evidence*. — Now then let the *Observer* take His Choice, What He will stand by; whether, that the Miracles of the *first* Age do, or do not, stand upon better Evidence than those of the *second*, *third*, and *fourth* Centuries. — If He chuses the first, What becomes of His

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His Inferences? if the latter, What of His Christianity? —

VII.

HE proceeds to another Observation. — ‘ I am surprised at the Author’s Pretension, that the Fathers of the earlier Ages had greater need of the Arts of false Miracles for Their Defence and Security, than the later Fathers had. They had, if you please, greater need of true Miracles to support the Credit of the Gospel ; which Circumstance may be admitted as strengthening the Credibility of any proper Evidence, Which appears in the Records of those Times, to prove that Miracles really were wrought. But it can afford no sort of Presumption, that the Christians of those Times forged Miracles ’.

‘ THEY had, if you please, greater need of true Miracles, to support the Credit of the Gospel.’ — But will not the same Reasons, Which are here alledged to shew that They had greater need of true Miracles, shew equally that They might suppose (however erroneously) that They had greater need of false Ones, to supply the Place of the true? For though the Miracles, Which They reported or argued upon, were false ; yet They reported and argued upon them as true Miracles. — To say therefore (as the Observer does) that They had greater need of true Miracles, is admitting that They might think

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think They had greater need of *false* Ones : And if They *thought* that They had greater need of *false* Miracles ; it is the same Thing, in the present Question, as if They *really had* such need of them ; as being What is sufficient to account for Their forging, or propagating them : And that They *might* think They had greater need of *false* Miracles, is shewn by the same Reasons, Which are urged to prove, that They had greater need of *true* ones.

WHY is it said that They had greater need of *true* Miracles ? —The *Observer* tells you, it was to *support the Credit of the Gospel*. —Well ? and will not the same *End* account for Their *imitating*, What is thought thus *useful* to *support the Credit of the Gospel* ? —If *Numa*, *Solon*, and *Lycurgus*, pretended to *Inspiration*, to support the Credit of Their Laws or Religion, at *Rome*, *Athens*, and *Sparta* ; was it not because *true* Inspiration would have been a Support to them ? —The Usefulness of the *Original*, infers the Usefulness of the *Copy*, or *Counterfeit* ; so long as it does not appear to be a *Counterfeit*, but the *Original* ; for they are identical Propositions.

‘ WHAT (says the *Observer*) should They forge ‘ Miracles for ? ’ — I ask Him, in return, — What should They have used *true* Miracles for ? — When He answers My Question, He will answer His own. — But hear Him. — ‘ What should They forge ‘ them for ? Why, to make Profelytes to that ‘ Faith which exposed Them to all Their Suffer-
‘ ings.’

ings.¹ Now, though the *Observer* does not seem to be aware of it; This, if it be any Argument against Their making use of *false* Miracles, is equally so against making use of *true* ones, and even against the preaching and Profession of Christianity at all. For, if the Fear of the Sufferings, attendant upon the preaching and Profession of Christianity, would have deterred Them from making use of *false* Miracles; there was the *same* Fear to deter Them from making use of *true* Ones, and from preaching and professing Christianity at all; since the *same* Sufferings, from the strong Prejudices of the *Fleishens* against Christianity, would have attended that Religion, however propagated, whether by *false* Miracles, or *true*. But if Their Assurance of the *Truth* of Christianity, was sufficient to enable Them to go on, notwithstanding the Terrors of Persecution; the *same* Faith would be sufficient to support Them in propagating it, though by *false* Miracles. Because, though the Miracles were *false*, They knew the Religion itself to be *true*; and Their Faith in *That*, being the *same* in both Cases, would, in both Cases, be equally a sufficient Motive.

THE *Observer* adds — “Common Sense would rather lead Us to argue thus; that as the Christians in these Ages, gave (or were ready to give) the same Evidence of Their steady Adherence to the Truth, that *Christ* and His *Apostles* gave; — surely it ought to secure such Reporters from the

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' Charge of *Fraud and Imposture*?' — True; but from *Fraud and Imposture* in *What*? — As these Christians were ready to suffer Martyrdom, in Evidence of Their steady Adherence to the Truth of Christianity; Nothing more can be concluded from this *common-Sense Argument*, than that This will secure Them from the Charge of *Fraud and Imposture*, in *That* to the Truth of *Which* They were ready to give this Evidence of Their steady Adherence; and That is, to the Truth of *Christianity*, or Their *Religion in general*: But it does not follow, that This will secure Them from the Charge of *Fraud and Imposture* in the *Means* They made use of, in Support of this true Religion; a Conclusion, Which the Premises will not warrant. — If the *Observer* can shew, that They were ready to give the same Evidence to the Truth of *these Miracles*; He will say Something: But He Himself has asked, in another Place—' Who laid down His Life in Testimony to any Miracles wrought in After-ages?' And He answers,— ' No-body. Martyrs there were in After-ages; But They were not Martyrs to *new Miracles*, but to the *Christian Faith*, as it stood upon the Miracles wrought by Christ and His Apostles.' — Which is therefore a sufficient Answer, at the same time, to all He has now said.

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THE *Introductory Discourse* had argued, that 'no Man surely can doubt, but that Those, Who would either forge, or make use of forged Books, would in the same Cause, and for the same Ends, make use of forged Miracles'.—To This the *Observer* answers: — 'Be it granted, for Argument's sake, that as They admitted some Books as genuine, Which, upon stricter Search, were found to be spurious; so They also admitted some Miracles, Which were not sufficiently well attested. How will This help to support His general Conclusion, that no Miracles were wrought in those Ages?'

BUT Whose Argument is This?—Is the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* inferring, that no real Miracles were wrought, from Their admitting some spurious ones; or from Their admitting some spurious Books? — No: The Argument is no more than This—that no Man can doubt, but that They, Who would either forge, or make use of forged Books; would also make use, for the same Ends, of forged Miracles. — The Argument is, that Their making use of forged Books, is Reason sufficient to justify the supposing, that They would not scruple to make use of forged Miracles.—How does the *Observer* answer This? Why, 'admit (says He) that They used some spurious Miracles, it does not follow that

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' *Introd. Disc.* p. 38.

' *Observ.* p. 21.

‘ that there were *none true*.’—Our Author concludes, from Their making use of *forged Books*, that They *would not scruple* to make use of *forged Miracles*; And the Observer tells Him, that He cannot conclude, from Their using *some spurious Miracles*, that there were *no true Miracles*; Which it is *Their Business* to answer, Who reason in that manner—Our Author has Nothing to do with it.

THE Observer asks—‘ Why, if (the Corruptions of the Age notwithstanding) among these *forged Books* there were some *genuine Pieces*; is it not as natural to suppose, that among these *juggling Tricks*, as He [the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*] calls them, there might have been some real Miracles?’—There *might* have been real Miracles among false Ones?—Undoubtedly, there *might* have been. Our Author pretends to no Reasons *a priori* about them. If the Observer will please to point them out, and shew as good Reason and Evidence, whereby to distinguish the *true Miracles* from the *false*, as We have to distinguish the *genuine* from the *spurious Pieces*; I suppose the Author will be as ready to admit the one, as the other.

BUT I would ask the Observer, in my turn—Does it follow, that, because among the *Books* there were some *genuine*, as well as *spurious Pieces*; Therefore among the *Miracles* there *must also* have been some *real*, as well as some *false Ones*?—If not, to what Purpose is it to say, that there *might* have been. Our Author (as I observed before)

fore) is not arguing, that, because there were *some* *spurious* Miracles, therefore all were so; any more than He would argue, that, because there were *some* *spurious* Books, therefore all were such. The only Thing design'd to be infer'd here is, that They who would make use of *forged* Books, would not scruple to make use of *forged* Miracles. There might indeed have been (for any Thing intended to be deduced from this Argument to the Contrary) a Mixture of false and true, in both Cases: But then, having proved from *this* Argument, that it is reasonable to suppose, that there were *some* *false* Miracles; the Question will be, not whether there might not have been *some* *true* Miracles also; but, whether there is sufficient Authority to believe there were, or not.—

For, to take the *Observer* in his own Way, I will just remind Him, that there is not the same Reason to suppose, that (to use the *Observer's* Language) there were *real* Miracles among the *false*; as there is to suppose, that there were *some* *genuine* Pieces among the *forged* Books; and that the Cases are therefore by no means Parallel; Which, to say the Truth, are Things, the *Observer* does not seem to be very happy in drawing.—For the *genuine*, and *spurious* Pieces, stand upon Evidence of *different* Value; between Which, by their proper Notes and Characters, true Critique is able to distinguish.—If the Case has been, or can be the same, in Respect to the Miracles We are speaking of; the *Observer* may please to shew it: But till He has done so, He must be contented to own, that,

that, *though* it be reasonable to believe, that, in the Ages We are treating of, there were some genuine, as well as *spurious Books*; it does not follow, that it is *therefore* reasonable to believe also, that there were some *real*, as well as *false Miracles*;—Whatever there *might* have been:—Of which great Consolation I shall not attempt to deprive Anyone; Since the Question is not, What there *might*, or *might not* have been; but What there *was*.

THAT the *Fathers* of those Ages *forged*, or made use of *forged Books*, was properly alledged by the *Introductory Discourse*, to shew that there is Reason to suppose, that the *same Fathers would not scruple* to make use of *forged Miracles*; Which was all intended in the Argument.—But, as the Words have been now *shuffled*; that, ‘as They used some ‘*spurious Books, so They used some spurious Miracles*; and that *as there were some genuine Pieces among the spurious, so there might have been some real Miracles among the false*—All This, as it is only a Parcel of Words, with an *Appearance of Something*, without being *any Thing*; so the Reader, I believe, would look upon it, (in Anyone but the Author of the *Observations*) to be at best, but a *juggling Trick*.

IX.

THE *Introductory Discourse* had said—‘The ‘*great Fame and Success of the Apostolic Miracles*, would naturally excite Some also of the ‘*most Crafty, when the Apostles Themselves were ‘dead, to attempt some juggling Tricks in Imitation*

tation of them".—' It is worth remarking, (says the *Observer*) that this Passage absolutely destroys His Argument, by which He endeavours to disgrace the Miracles of the earlier Ages, from the supposed Forgeries of the fourth Century.—How so?—Why, ' We have *before* been told, that the Forgeries of the fourth Century could never have had a Being, if the World had not been prepared for them by the Forgeries of the preceding Ages. But *now*'—What?—Why, ' *Now*, it seems, He has found out, that an Age of *Impostures*, may arise immediately out of an Age of true Miracles, by way of Imitation'.—

THE Author of the *Introductory Discourse* says only, ' that Some of the most crafty, in the Age succeeding the Apostles, might attempt some juggling Tricks, in Imitation of the Miracles of the Apostles ;' All Which may be accounted for, supposing no Age of *Imposture* before it : But does it therefore follow, that We may equally suppose, that the numerous *Impostures* of the fourth Century ; Which, by their *Absurdity* and *Incredibility*, shew the *Credulity* of the People, and the *Assurance* and *Security* of the *Fathers*, to have arisen to such a surprising Height as to be inconsistent with supposing the Trade to begin in that Age ; does it therefore follow, that We may equally suppose such an Age of *Impostures* (as This may indeed be called) to arise immediately out of an Age of true Miracles ? Our Author supposes the first Case to be probable,

^u *Intro. Disc.* p. 42.

^w *Observ.* p. 22.

bable, the latter to be improbable. And where is the *Inconsistency* of This, Which the *Observer* is so hasty to fix upon Him?—Yet, upon the Credit of having thus *absolutely destroyed* the Author's Argument, Which, the *Observer* says, is gone, He ventures to assert, that it is just as natural to suppose, that the Fame and Success of *true* Miracles in the *third* Century, might give rise to the *Impositions* of the *fourth*; as that the Fame and Success of *true* Miracles in the *first* Century, gave rise to the *Impositions* of the *second*.—I am sorry to remind the Reader of *Parallels* again!—But the Difference of the two Cases hath been sufficiently shewn.

X.

Since He has thought fit (says the *Observer*) to offer His *Suspicion* on *one* Side of the Question, I may have Liberty, I hope, to offer *one* *Presumption* on the *other*.—And then He cites *Mark xvi. 17.* *And these Signs shall follow Them that believe, &c.* Upon which He remarks—It will be observed, that this Promise was not made to the Apostles *personally*, but to *Them* that *should believe* through Their preaching, without any *Limitation* of the Time for the Continuance of these Powers to *Their* Days. And when it is considered, how great a Part of the *Heathen* World remained unconverted *after* Their Days, it is no unreasonable Supposition, that these

‘ these Powers did not expire with the Apostles,
‘ but were continued to Their Successors in the
‘ Work of propagating the Gospel ’.

As my only Intention, in these Papers, is to
shew, that the *Observer's Exceptions* to the Argu-
ments of the *Introductory Discourse*, are of no
Force; I shall not take upon Me farther to
enter into the *Merits of the Cause*, whether there
were or were not Miracles after the Age of the
Apostles.— I shall only remark, that the *Ob-
server's Presumption* for the Continuance of Mi-
racles after the Days of the Apostles; will equally
be a *Presumption* for the Continuance of Miracles to
the *Present Age*.— May We not still argue (in the
same manner as He does) ‘ that the *Promise* was
‘ not made to the *Apostles personally*, but to Those
‘ Who should believe, *without any Limitation of*
‘ *the Time* to Their Days. And when We con-
‘ sider, how great a Part of the Heathen-World
‘ *remains still unconverted*, it is no unreasonable
‘ Supposition, that these Powers did not expire
‘ with the Apostles, but were continued to Their
‘ Successors, in the Work of the Ministry, even
‘ to *our own Days*.’—The *Observer* indeed puts
it—‘ that the *Promise* was made to Those Who
‘ should believe *through the Apostles' preaching* :’
But if That makes any Difference between His
Argument and Mine; it will, at the same Time,
confine these miraculous Powers to the *immediate*
Disciples of the *Apostles*; Which yet, I suppose, He
does not intend to do. Besides, whatever His

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Words

Words do, His Argument will extend farther ; Since so great a Part of the Heathen-World remained still unconverted in all the succeeding Centuries ; Which is What His Argument is founded upon.— If the Observer's Presumption then be good for any Thing, it may as well be applied to prove the Continuance of Miracles to the Present Age, as to any Age beyond, at least, That of the immediate Disciples of the Apostles : —But if no Miracles are continued, notwithstanding this Presumption ; it must follow that the Presumption is good for nothing.— He must then, either give up His Argument for Miracles, at least beyond the immediate Disciples of the Apostles ; or else He must contend also, upon the same Principles, for the Continuance of Miracles still.—He will excuse Me if I say, that a Writer, Who is so ready to accuse our Author, without any good Reason, of putting Popery in Possession of Antiquity ; should have been a little more cautious Himself, to have avoided the Charge He justly incurs, of putting Popery in Possession, of an Argument, Which, if conclusive (and it is as conclusive to the Times of Popery, as to the Times He makes use of it for) would do it more Service, than all the Antiquity our Author has given it.

XI.

‘ How long they were continued (adds He) I say not, and perhaps there is not Light enough left in History to settle this Point ; as indeed it nothing concerns Us. But the earliest Fathers unan-

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concerning Miraculous Powers. 99

‘nimonously affirm, that these Powers subsisted in
‘the Church in *Their* Times, and *why* They are
‘not to be believed, it is the Author’s Business to
‘shew’.—It is so; and let the Fact be tried:
But this Point We have now gained, by the *Observer*’s own Confession; that *How long* these Powers
subsisted in the Church after the Days of the Apo-
stles, *nothing* concerns Us: But if not; then it *no-*
thing concerns Us, whether they ceased in the *fourth*,
or in the *third*, or in the *second* Century: And if
not; let Him shew that it *more* concerns Us (in
His Scheme) whether they ceased or not in the
first.—But then, if all This *nothing* concerns Us;
Why has He been at the Pains of writing a Pam-
phlet, to alarm the Public, as if the *Introductory Dis-*
course was a Book of a bad Tendency, and the Doc-
trine of it attended with ill Consequences?—Since it
now turns out, that, whether it be true or false,
it *nothing* at all concerns Us.

XII.

THE *Observer* asks—‘Of what Service it can
‘be to the Protestant Cause, to take so much Pains
‘as the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* has
‘taken to lessen the Credit of Primitive Antiquity,
‘and to put Popery in Possession of as much of it as
‘possibly He could, and more, perhaps, than Po-
‘pery can in Justice challenge’.

THE only Question is, whether the Fact be
true; That the Miracles pretended to in Primitive

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Antiquity,

* *Observ.* p. 25.

* *Ibid.* p. 26.

Antiquity, after the Days of the Apostles, are such as *Popery* may appeal to?—If This be true, it can do no *Disservice* to the *Protestant Cause*, to lessen the *Credit of Primitive Antiquity* in this Particular.

—Again: If the Fact be true, that no Miracles really were wrought, after the Times of the Apostles; it can do no *Disservice* to the *Protestant Cause*, to lessen the *Credit of Primitive Antiquity* herein: Because *Truth* can never be, in the last Result, of *Disservice* to any good Cause, or to true Religion; For That would be to make *Truth* destructive of itself. The only Question is, *What the Truth is?* For *wherever* it is found, No Man need be afraid of asserting, or defending it.

How He puts *Popery* in Possession of *Antiquity*, I own I am at a loss to understand; unless, to wrest from *Popery*, the *Authority* of those *Miracles*, Which it may otherwise plead in Support of the *Antiquity* of its false Doctrine and Superstition; be to put it in Possession of that *Authority*.—To shew the *Miracles*, Which the *Romanists* may appeal to in *Antiquity*, to be *spurious Miracles*; is no more a putting Them in Possession of *Antiquity*; than it would be so, to shew any ancient Books, Which They might appeal to, to be *spurious Books*.—But, ‘The *Papists* (He says) will think it for Their Advantage to accept of the high Rank He has given Them in *Ecclesiastical Antiquity*, without troubling Themselves about His Censures of the Fathers^b.’ The high Rank Which He has given the *Papists* in *Ecclesiastical Antiquity*,

^b Observ. p. 29.

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Antiquity, is That of pleading *false Miracles*, in Support of Their *false Doctrines*; Which is a *Rank*, I suppose, They are welcome to accept of: For if it can be proved, that such Miracles are *false*, (Which is the Prime Point to be debated) whether They trouble Themselves about His Censures, or not, will be of as little Consequence; as whether They trouble Themselves about other Censures, Which are justly and truly laid upon Their Church.—But it may be a Question worth asking,—Who gives Them the *higher Rank* in *Antiquity*? They Who deny all Miracles to which They do or may appeal, in Support of Their Corruptions, after the Days of the Apostles; or They Who admit such Miracles up to the *second Century*?—Surely, the Latter put Popery in Possession of much higher Antiquity, than the Former.

THE *Introductory Discourse* says—‘ Our Dispute with the *Romanists* is, not how ancient, but how true Their Doctrines and Practices are.’—To Which the *Observer* answers—‘ If it could be made appear that the *Popish Sense*, of *Transubstantiation* [of those Words, This is my Body, and This is my Blood] was the *unanimous, current, Doctrine* of the *second Century*, it could scarce be doubted, but it was the Doctrine also of the *first*; and it would be more natural for *Unbelievers* to lay hold of This, as an Objection against the Gospel, than easy for *Us* to answer it^d.’—For *Us*?—For *Whom*?—Not very easy indeed for *Those* to answer it, Who are of Opinion, that any Doctrine, however

^c *Introd. Disc.* p. 22.

^d *Observ.* p. 27.

however *absurd and impossible*, if it were the Doctrine of the *second* Age, must therefore have been the Doctrine of the *first* also; of Christ and His Apostles: But it would not be difficult for Others to answer it, Who go more rationally to work; and are not of Opinion, that the Doctrine of the *second* Century, however unanimous and current, can rationalize an Absurdity, or verify a Contradiction.—If it could be made appear, that the *Papish Sense*, of *Transubstantiation* really was the unanimous and current Sense of the *second* Century;—What would a rational, sensible, honest Christian infer?—Certainly, that the *second* Century were unanimously and currently, *mistaken*.—To reason otherwise, would be to pay a greater Honour to the Understanding of the *Fathers* of the *second* Century, than to That of Christ and His Apostles; and a greater Deference to the Writers of that Age, than to the Writers of the *Bible*.—Thither let us go; and if We can suppose Ourselves competently skill'd to understand the *Language of a Metaphor*; surely We are not, upon the Credit even of the *second* Century, to have so much Faith, as to give up the Truth and Wisdom of Christ and His Apostles to be *determin'd* by the Opinion of *that* Age; and to compliment Them with the Evidence of our Senses—to believe, that if Contradiction and Absurdity were the Doctrine of the *second* Century; therefore *it cannot be doubted*, that they were the Doctrine of the *first* also.—This is a *Stretch of Faith* not to be found, *no not in Israel*; and if it be not sufficient to *remove* a Mountain, it is sufficient
however

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however to raise one, that might overwhelm Christianity.—It still therefore remains true, notwithstanding the Observer's Instance of Transubstantiation, that our Dispute with the Romanists is, or ought to be, not how ancient, but how true. Their Doctrines and Practices are *‘*: And I think We need not a better Confutation of the Observer's Argument; than that the same Argument might prove, by His own Confession, that Transubstantiation was the Doctrine of Christ and His Apostles; Which (as Tillotson says of it with Respect to Popery) will be a Mill-Stone about the Neck of this Argument.

XIII.

THE Observer now draws near a Conclusion, and tells Us, that He shall dismiss the Reader with a few Reflections.

THE first is—‘ There is a great Difference between the Miracles wrought by Christ and His Apostles, and the Miracles of later Ages; as in Point of Importance, so also in Point of Evidence. The first were to be the Foundation of the Faith of all Ages, and therefore the Providence of God hath provided that they should be recorded to Us, under the strongest Circumstances of Credibility, in the Writings of the Apostles. The last, &c.—When the Apostles died,

‘ Τὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν εὐσεβεῖς καὶ φιλοσόφους μόνον πλῆθος
 μιᾶν καὶ ἐργεῖται ὁ λόγος ὡς παραρεῖται, παρὰ τὴν φύσιν
 καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν αὐτῶν. — Just. Mart. Apolog.
 prim. §. β'. p. 3. Edit. Grab.

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‘ died, the whole System of Faith was *sealed up* as
‘ compleat and perfect; and as no *other* Faith was
‘ afterwards to be admitted; so, if no Miracles
‘ had afterwards been wrought, the Foundation
‘ would have been equally secure. *The old Mira-*
‘ *cles are sufficient for the old Doctrines.*—Consider
‘ now the *Disparity of Evidence.* Christ confirmed
‘ all His Miracles, by that *one* great Miracle of
‘ all, His rising from the Dead. Of this Fact the
‘ Apostles were Eye-Witnesses, and were to testi-
‘ fy it throughout the World; and They did so,
‘ at the Peril of Their Lives, Which is the greatest
‘ Pledge that human Faith can give; God also
‘ confirming their Testimony, by the Signs and
‘ Wonders Which He wrought by Their Hands.
‘ But *Who* laid down His Life in Testimony to
‘ any Miracle wrought in *after* Ages? No-body.
‘ *Martyrs* there were in *after* Ages; But They
‘ were not Martyrs to *new* Miracles, but to the
‘ *Christian Faith*, as it stood upon the Miracles
‘ wrought by Christ and His Apostles.—Say the
‘ very worst you *can* say—that there is not so
‘ much as *one* Miracle upon Record since the Days
‘ of the Apostles, that is sufficiently attested;
‘ What has *Christianity* to do with This? No-
‘ thing; For Christianity stands not upon *new* Mi-
‘ racles, but upon the *old* ones †.

THE *Observer* could not, I think, *have dismiss'd*
the Reader with any Thing more in *Defence* of our
Author's Performance, or in *Confutation* of His
own.—For, What has He been doing?—A great
Clamour

† *Observ.* p. 30—32.

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Clamour and Outcry hath been raised against the *Introductory Discourse*, as a Book of an ill Aspect, and a bad Tendency—that the Evidence and Support of *Christianity* are in Danger. We have heard of *obvious Inferences* to be drawn, in *Derogation* from the *Authority of the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles*; of *Something lying at Bottom*, &c.—But now at length, the *Observer*, it seems, hath found out, that all This was Nothing but a *Panic*; and acknowledgēs—that *no Inferences* are to be drawn from the *Miracles* recorded of *later Ages*, in *Derogation* from the *Authority of the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles*; Since *there is a great Difference between the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles, and the Miracles of later Ages, as in Point of Importance, so also in Point of Evidence*:—that the Evidence and Support of *Christianity* are *not* endanger'd by the *Argument of the Introductory Discourse*; For, if *no Miracles had afterwards been wrought, the Foundation would have been equally secure*:—that the *Author* neither does, nor can do any *Prejudice to Christianity*, by asserting, or proving, that ‘We have
‘no sufficient Reason to believe, that miraculous
‘Powers were continued to the Church, after the
‘Days of the Apostles;’ Because, *Say the very worst you can say, that there is not so much as one Miracle upon Record since the Days of the Apostles, that is sufficiently attested, Christianity has nothing to do with it; For Christianity stands not upon new Miracles, but upon the old ones; and the Old Miracles are sufficient for the Old Doctrines.*—And so

the *Observer* has been writing a Pamphlet, and alarming the Public, with *Apprehensions for Christianity*, from the Attempt of the *Introductory Discourse*; and after *thirty Pages*, employed in endeavouring to shew, that the Author's *Arguments do not stop with the Fathers*, but *impeach Christ and His Apostles*; and, if admitted, may weaken the Support of Christianity—After all This, He owns and acknowledges, in the Conclusion (as Truth will out) that this same, once formidable, *Introductory Discourse*, is now, in the main Argument, become innocent and harmless; and that, supposing What it teaches, to be true, *Christianity hath nothing to do with it*.—Or, in other Words, it appears, that the *Observer* has been doing in this Controversy, What perhaps He never did in any other, giving Himself a great deal of Trouble, to very little Purpose.

BUT, however, the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* is not to come off so. — There remain some *incidental Consequences*, for Which He must still be called to an Account; for the *Observer's* last Reflection is—

XIV.

‘THERE is one Sense, in Which Christianity may be affected by this Dispute; Which is, as the *Credit* of the ancient Fathers may be affected by it. If You suppose Them to have been only *hasty and credulous* in these Reports, it will come

to but little; because They may yet competently serve for all the Uses for Which We want Them. And let it be remembered, that We Want not Their Judgment, but Their Integrity. We admit Them, not as *Authoritative Teachers*, but as *faithful Witnesses*; and This They may be, though in some Points *superstitious*, and too easy of Belief; For if every History is to be rejected as to the *main Body* and Substance of it, Which reports some Facts of *doubtful Authority*, I know not what History can stand.—But if it could be proved, that the Fathers were *Impostors* and *Forgers of Lies*, the Consequences may go a great Way.

THE learned Author of the *Jesuit-Cabal* farther opened, proposes also this Query.—What Sort of Evidence or Authority will be left by this Schemist, in the Issue of His Argument, to the *New Testament* itself? The only authentic Testimony that We have to the *Gospels* and *Epistles*, in that Volume, is the Testimony of the *Primitive Christian Writers*. The *Primitive Christian Writers*, by this Author's Account, were so *credulous* and so *fraudulent* together, that You cannot trust Them for the Truth of one *Miracle*. They report of Their own Times, though performed, as They say, to *Their own Knowledge*, &c.—What then is to become of Their *Credit*, by this Author's System, in attesting our *Gospels* and *Epistles* of the Testament, &c.—What authentick Testimony will He leave Us at

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last

‘ last for the *Miracles* even of Christ and His
 ‘ Apostles, when He has left us such unauthentic
 ‘ Testimonies to the *Records* themselves of those
 ‘ *Miracles*?’

HERE, it must be acknowledged, is some Difficulty—*How far* the *Historical Credit* of the Fathers, in other Matters, may be affected by Their supposed *Credulity* in, or *Forgery* of, the *Miracles*. Which They have related as true, after the Apostolic Age: And, how far the *Evidence* for the *Truth of Christianity*, and the *Authenticity of the Scriptures*, may be eventually weakened thereby.— This indeed seems to be the only Matter of real Weight in this Controversy; and deserves a careful and critical Examination.

1.—As to *Credulity*. If an Historian be found to be *superstitious*, or *credulous*, in Things of a certain Nature; may I not *discredit* such Things, if I have sufficient Reason for it; and yet believe Him in *other Matters*, or in the *main Substance* of the History, which I have *not* such Reason to *discredit*?—But the *Observer* Himself says, that, ‘ if
 ‘ every History is to be rejected, as to the *main*
 ‘ *Body* or Substance of it, Which reports *some*
 ‘ Facts of doubtful Authority, I know not what
 ‘ History can stand.’ Nor do I know therefore, how this Concession can stand with the *Observer’s* Charge upon the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*; Who, because He does not believe the Report of *Miracles* after the Days of the Apostles (Which certainly are of *doubtful Authority*) is accused,

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cused, for that Reason, of setting all Christian Writers, both ancient and modern, at absolute Defiance. However, the Observer now gives up the Article of Credulity, as not affecting the *Historical Credit* of the Fathers in other Points; and therefore I shall only observe, with regard to the Opener of the *Jesuit-Cabal*—that *Superstition* and *Credulity* alone, though they may invalidate the Testimony of the Reporters, in respect of the *Miracles* Which They relate after the Days of the Apostles; will yet not equally render these Writers *incompetent Witnesses* as to the *Reception* of the Books of Scripture: Because, tho' They may be thought to be capable of being imposed upon by a *pretended Miracle*; We cannot conclude that, for that Reason, They must be equally capable of being so far imposed upon, as to believe that the Books of Scripture were received as genuine in all Churches, if they were not so received.—The *Notoriety* in the Nature of such a Fact will not permit the Supposition.

II.—As to *Forgery*. Supposing the Fathers, here accused, to have really forged the Miracles Which They relate as true; or knew them to be forged:—I would ask, Whether, though a Writer be known to have forged some Stories; or to have related them as true, knowing them to be forged; I would ask, Whether We are obliged, for that Reason, to reject His Authority in all other Things, or in the main Body of His History?—May I not believe Him in Things Which I have no Reason to think He does forge, or Which I have Reason to think

think He *does not* forge; because I reject What I have Reason to think, notwithstanding, that He *does* forge?—If I reject the Authority of a Writer in *Part* of His History, Which I have Reason to think He has forged; am I obliged therefore to reject His Authority in the *Whole*, Which I have *not* equal Reason for?—Does the *Observer* believe all the Romantic Adventures and *Forgeries*, Which the *Roman Historians* have adorned Their Narrations with, in the first Ages of *Rome*; or all the *Forgeries* of some *modern Travellers*? I suppose His Faith does not go so far: But does He therefore set all these *Historians*, both ancient and modern, at *absolute Defiance*; reject Their Authority in all Parts, or in the *main Body* of Their *History* or *Travels*, and believe Them in Nothing?—If a *great fat Man* (for Instance) should tell Me, that He passed with Ease through a narrow Passage in one of the *Ægyptian Pyramids*, through Which, I know at the same Time, that a *little thin Man* could scarce with difficulty creep; I should certainly reject this Story as a *Forgery*: But must I also, for that Reason, disbelieve that He went into, or saw the *Pyramids* at all?—In a Word, may I not reject any Writer's Authority, in Matters Which do not appear to be attended with sufficient Reasons of Credibility; and yet believe other Matters, upon His Authority, Which, upon the whole, do appear with such concurrent Reasons of Credibility?—Will a *Forgery*, of a certain particular Kind, in one Part of a History, so *absolutely invalidate* the *Historian's* Authority; that

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that no *Reasons* can authenticate it in another independent Part? — But to be more particular.

1. IF the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel History*, and that the *Books of Scripture* are the *Writings of Those Whose Names they bear*, and have been genuinely delivered down to Us; if these Things do not depend solely upon those *Fathers* Who are supposed to have forged, or related as true knowing them to be forged, *Miracles* after the Days of the *Apostles*; then this *Accusation*, supposing it to be made good, and to weaken *Their Credit*; will not yet destroy our Evidence for the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History*. — If these Gentlemen can shew that it will, They must therefore at the same Time shew, that the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History*, does solely depend upon the Testimony of *Those Fathers* Who lie under the present *Accusation*. But This, I think, They will not, for *Their own Credit*, or for the *Interest of Christianity* (upon *Their Scheme*) attempt. For then, if it should chance to turn out, that the *Fathers* have related any *Miracles* as true, knowing them to be false; the Consequence will be, upon these Gentlemen's Scheme, that We have no sufficient Authority for the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel*.

BUT whether They shall please to attempt This or not; it does not appear to be the *Truth* of the Case. — The *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History* do not rest upon the mere independent Testimony and Authority of the *Fathers* in general; much less upon any *One*, or *All* of *Those* Who may

may be supposed to lie under the present Accusation.—It depends upon the internal, external, and collateral Evidences, *taken together*; upon *all the concurrent Proofs*; not upon any *single* one alone.—It depends upon the *united* Voice of *all Ecclesiastical* Antiquity, confirmed, in a Variety of Instances, by *Prophane*.—Shall We confine the Evidences of Christianity to a narrower Compass, than We have any Occasion to do? Or, when Providence hath supplied Us with a *Cloud of Witnesses*, shall We be for contenting Ourselves with placing it upon the Faith and Credit of *one Kind only*?

As to the *Authenticity of the Scriptures* in particular; This does not stand merely upon the bare Testimony and Authority of Those, Who are supposed to have related as true, Miracles Which They knew to be false: But is attested by the united Voice of All; of Those Who do *not*, as well as of Those Who *do*, lie under the present Accusation; as received by all Ages, the pure and the corrupt, the learned as well as the unlearned; as translated into all Languages, and received by all Churches as genuin. Hath it been said that *All* the Fathers have thus *tamper'd with false Miracles*? But *All* witness to the *Authenticity of Scripture*. Hath it been said that *whole Churches* have forged Miracles, or attested them as true, knowing them to be forged; much less *all* the Churches? Yet *all* received the Scriptures, and stand Evidences for them.

BUT, says the *Opener*, this ‘very Notoriety of
‘the Thing, and the general Reception of those
‘Books

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‘ Books in all Churches from the first Publication, is known to Us only by the Relations of the same Primitive Writers.’—So again—The only authentic Testimony that We have to the Gospels and Epistles in the New Testament, is the Testimony of the Primitive Christian Writers.* — But will this Author undertake to prove, that the *only authentic Testimony* that We have to these Gospels and Epistles, is the Testimony *only of those particular* Primitive Christian Writers, Who are here supposed to have *forged*, or related as true, Miracles which They knew to be forged? Will He undertake to prove, that the *Notoriety* of the Thing, and the Reception of the Scriptures in *all* Churches, from the first Publication, stand *merely* upon the Testimony of *those Same* Primitive Writers, Who may have been guilty of the Practice aforementioned? — If He cannot prove This; His talking of the Reception of the Scriptures depending upon the *Evidence of Primitive Writers* in general, will fall short of the Point.

THE Truth of the *Facts* relating to the *Gospel-History*, and the *Reception of the Books of Scripture*, depend *not* merely on the Testimony of *these* Fathers; but upon That of *All* the Primitive Christian Writers, and upon the *Non-contradiction* of *Heretics* and *Infidels*, and *Persecutors* of the Christian Name, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, from the Time of their first Publication; Who were capable of *exa-*
mining

* Jesuit-Cabal, p. 45, 46.

mining into the Truth, and wanted not Prejudice, or Malice, sufficient to have inclined Them to *deny* these Matters of Fact, and to have left upon Record the *Detection* of these Frauds, if they had been *Frauds*. But, on the contrary, *All These*, either by confessing, or not contradicting the Facts, where it was Their Business, and for the Interest of Their Cause to have done it, become Evidences for them. If the Scriptures had *not* been received as genuin; this Pretence could not have been carried through so many successive Ages: For as, on one hand, We may reasonably suppose, that They Who were zealous for the *Truth* of genuin Christianity, would have taken Care to have preserved, and propagated the Truth as to this Point; so, on the other hand, the various *Heretics*, and *Enemies* of Christianity were watchful for every Objection against it; and would, no doubt, have taken Care, that We should have heard of This amongst the rest: And, though They might not have been able to have confuted every *Pretence to Miraculous Powers*; could not have failed of knowing the Truth of *this* Fact, from the *Notoriety* in the *Nature* of it; Whether the Christian Churches *received those Books* Which contained the Christian Religion, or not. Was it ever pretended that this Fraud was detected? which certainly would have been attacked, had the Fact stood *only* upon the Credit of *Some* of the Fathers Who wrote in the Ages after the Apostles; and Who might (according to the Hypothesis of the *Introductory Discourse*) have been accused of *tampering*
with

with *false Miracles*. — On the contrary, They were forced to take the Scriptures as They found them, and to try only if They could turn them to Their own Sense or Advantage. — If therefore the Scriptures, delivered down through the several successive Ages of the Church as pure and genuine, had not been so, and really received as such, by all Churches; We must have heard of it, either from *Friends* or *Enemies*; unless We will suppose that all Books passed through the Hands of the *Fathers* here accused; and that it was in Their Power to suppress, and, with a Kind of *Turkish Barbarism*, to have destroyed all Learning but Their own. — But when We consider the *Universality* of the Scriptures, their Translation into *all Languages*, and the Care with Which every Church and Nation were naturally concerned to preserve, and deliver them down genuine and uncorrupt; We cannot suppose that any Attempt to the contrary could have met with Success; or that the *Account* of the Fraud would not, from some Hand or other, have come down to Us, as well as the *Fraud itself*¹. But sure I need not remind these Gentlemen *how many Sorts of Proof* are to be produced in Evidence

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¹ Volumina Divina, longè majori Studio, quàm ulla alia in Ecclesia asservata, apud omnes Nationes Memoriae mandata, in omnes Linguas transfusa, ab omnibus Sectis, orthodoxis & hæreticis, Catholicis & Schismaticis, Græcis & Latinis, Sarmatis & Æthiopibus recepta fuerint, aliis aliorum Oculos & Manus accuratè observantibus, ita ut ne minima quidem, quæ ullius esset Momenti, Depravatio accidere potuerit, quin, ut ita dicam, universus insurgeret orbis, & de illata Injuria apud Omnes ubique quereretur. — *Dall. de usu Patr. c. iv. p. 61. Ed. Lat. Geneva. 1686.*

for the *Truth* and *Credibility* of *Christianity*? Let Them only recollect a little, what Answer *They* would give to any of our *modern Infidels*, Who should object to Them, What *They* Themselves seem to say, viz. that the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History* of *Christianity*, depend *merely* upon the Evidence of Those *Primitive Christian Writers*, Whom the *Introductory Discourse* hath charged with *forging*, or relating as true, *Miracles* Which *They* knew to be forged—that the *only authentic Testimony* to our *Gospels* and *Epistles* are the *Testimony* of *These* Fathers—that the Reception of the *Scriptures* as genuin, is known *only* by the Relations of *These* Writers—nay, that there is *no authentic Testimony*, but That of *These* Fathers, for the *Miracles* of *Christ* and *His Apostles*^m. — Let Them consider how *They* would answer any One, Who should assert What *They* now do; and the same Answers will serve for Themselves. — In the mean while, I must observe, that, surely, if any *obvious Inferences* are to be drawn, in Prejudice to the *Miracles* of *Christ* and *His Apostles*, they may be drawn from such Principles as these. — But as the *Truth* of *Christianity* had really no Necessity for the fraudulent Arts of *false Miracles* for its first Propagation and Establishment; so neither hath it now for the *patronizing* such Arts; and it will be found, that the *real Harm* to original *Christianity*, is done, not by Those Who prudently *reject* the *Impostures* of *After-ages*; but by Those Who, injudiciously, *defend* them.

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^m Jesuit-Cabal, p. 45.

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2. BUT now We will suppose (What yet is not the Truth of the Case) that the *Truth and Credibility of Christianity*, and the *Authenticity of the Books of Scripture*, do really depend, *solely and merely*, upon the Authority and Testimony of the *Fathers* Who succeeded the Apostles; and that They may be generally supposed, either to have *forged* the *Miracles* Which They have recorded of those Days; or to have related them as true, knowing them to be so forged.

AND I shall venture to say, that even in this Case, I do not at present see, that, altho' I should *discredit such Relations of Miracles*; I should, for that Reason, be also obliged to *reject* the Authority of These Primitive Writers in the *main Body* of Their *History of Christianity*; or, as to the *Authenticity of the Books of Scripture*;

First, If, notwithstanding it be supposed, that These Writers would *not* falsify in the *main Body* of Their History; or in asserting the Truth of, or in *delivering down* as *genuin* and universally received, the *Books of Scripture*; We may yet, at the same Time, *account consistently* for Their supposed Conduct in relation to *Miracles*.

NOW, the *Propagation of Christianity*, the Religion of the Fathers, is supposed to be the *End* and *Design* of Their preaching and writing. The *Books of Scripture* are supposed to contain the *original History, and Evidences of it*. Among the *Means* of propagating These, a Pretence to the Continuation of *Miracles* might be esteemed as one. From hence We may account for Their Conduct in respect

respect to *Miracles*, the *Means* only to the *End*; consistently with supposing Their strict Regard to Truth, in Their Account of the *Religion itself*, with the *original History and Evidences of it*, Which was the *End*. — We may have sufficient Reason to depend upon Their Authority, for the Authenticity of Their History in the *main Body* of it, in the *main Facts* and Substance, and for the *Genuineness* of the *original History and Evidences of Christianity*, the Point and *End*; consistently with supposing, that They might not speak Truth concerning *some particular, extrinsic Circumstances*, Which They Themselves looked upon merely as *Means* to the Propagation of it after the Death of the Apostles: And it does not follow, that They, Who might think it lawful and innocent, to make use of such Conduct in regard to the *Means of propagating a Religion* in Their *own Times*; could not think This; unless They thought it *also as lawful and innocent*, to *forge the Religion itself*, or the *original History and Evidences of it*. Or, it does not follow, that They who would *not* forge the *whole History*, and *original Evidences* of the Religion, or the *Religion itself*; would not yet, notwithstanding, make use of *forged Miracles*, for the sake of *propagating* that Religion *afterwards*. And if not; then it does not follow, that if We *discredit* Their Authority in *some Facts*, Which We suppose Them to look upon only as *Means* to an *End*; We must therefore *reject* Their Authority in the *main Fact* and *End* itself. — Means and Facts, on Which the *Truth* of Christianity doth not depend; and with Which

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(by the *Observer's* own Confession) *Christianity* hath really nothing to do. — If the Historians have forged, or related as true, knowing them to be forged, some *Circumstances* relating to the *Education* and *Actions* of *Romulus*, and the *Auguries* at the *Foundation* of *Rome*; may I not here separate *Truth* from *Fable*; and believe the *Truth* of the *Foundation* of the *City*, tho' upon the same *Authority* Which delivers the other *fabulous Part* of the *Account*? Am I obliged to believe, or disbelieve, Both alike? No: Because it may be supposed, that the Historians might, for some Ends or other, forge, or relate as true, knowing them to be forged, some *Circumstances* relating to the *Foundation* of *Rome*; but yet it will be hard to suppose, for that Reason, that They would, or must therefore have done the same, in respect to the *main Point*, and have falsified in telling Us that there was any such *City*, or *Foundation* of a *City* at all. — We are not obliged to This; Because We can account for Their Forgeries in the one Case, consistently with supposing, that They would not forge in the other. — Or, supposing that They would not falsify in the *main Transaction*; We may yet suppose consistently, that They might, nevertheless, falsify in some of the *Circumstances* relating thereto.

THE *Truth* of the present Case then may be This. — The *Fathers* were pious, good Men; zealous for the *Propagation* of a *Religion* Which They believed to be true, and of the *Original History* and *Evidences* of it, Which They knew to be divine. We have Reason, from all *Circumstances* laid together,

gether, to believe that They not only have not, but that They neither would, nor could have reported a Falshood, in Relation to the *original History* and *Evidences* of Christianity, and forged the *Whole* of the Religion Which They professed.— The *Means* They might make use of in the *Propagation* of this Religion after the Death of the Apostles, though wrong, might be esteemed to be otherwise by Them; as they were looked upon to be innocent in themselves, and might serve to spread and establish the Religion, and the History of it, Which they knew to be true. Therefore, though We may have Reason to think, that They have not always spoken Truth in regard to these *Means* made use of by Themselves in the *Propagation* of Their Religion; it does not follow, that We must believe They forged the *original History* and *Evidences* of it also: —Because, *supposing* that They would *not* forge or falsify in the *original History* and *Evidences* of it; We may yet, *consistently*, suppose, for the Reasons before given, that They *might* allow Themselves to make use of a different Conduct, in relation to the *Means* of *propagating* it: For the one is consistent with the Character of pious (tho' *mistaken*) Men; the other is not.— The Books of Scripture are supposed to be, and are delivered down by Them as, the *Original History* and *Evidences of Christianity*; as Books containing the Revelation of the *true Religion* from God Himself; as the Life and Actions of that Person, Who was sent immediately from God, and there represented as Son of God, the Divine Patron and Founder

Founder of Their Religion; together with the Lives and Actions of Those, to Whom He immediately delegated His Power and Authority in the Work of the Ministry. — Now, We cannot suppose these Fathers to have forged *such Books*, or to have delivered them down as *genuin*, and as *received by all Churches* as such *Divine Revelation*, if They *knew* it to be all a *Fable*; without imagining Them to have been the most *abandon'd* and *impious Wretches* in Nature; guilty of the most *daring Impiety*; Which no *Error* could excuse, no *End* could justify. But, supposing the *Religion* to be true, and the Professors to be assured of it, and to believe the Original History and Evidences of it; Their Mistakes or Errors, in regard to the Innocence and Lawfulness of the *Means* which They might make use of, for the sake of spreading and establishing this true Religion, and its History; upon Which They are supposed to believe the Salvation of Men depended; Their Errors and Mistakes *here*, though not to be *justified*, are yet not absolutely irreconcilable with the Character of Piety. — The Character is here a *mistaken Piety*, a Practice of *wrong Means*, through too hasty a Zeal for obtaining a *right End*; Which, though it will not *sanctify those Means*, may yet possibly preserve the *general Character* of the *mistaken Person* from the Charge of *Impiety*, as I have before shewn^a. And since We may account for Their Conduct in regard to Their pretended *Miracles*, consistently with supposing that They would *not falsify* in the Case be-

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^a Vid. p. 76, &c.

fore-mention'd ; it follows, that Their *Authority or Testimony*, though *not* available in *one* Case, may yet be *depended upon* in *another*.

If the general Character of Piety and Honesty in these Fathers, be confirmed and established, as well by the Testimony of Others, as by the internal Marks and Signatures in Their own Writings; confirmed by Those, against Whom the Charge of Forgery does not lie ; then, being thus secured of Their Character *in general*, here will be Reason sufficient to give Credit, upon Their Authority, to the *main Body* of Their History, and the Truth of Christianity ; and yet We may, notwithstanding, in some *incidental Particulars*, upon Which the Truth of Christianity does *not depend*, see Reason to believe that They possibly might be so far mistaken, through an over-heated Zeal, as to imagine those *Means* of establishing it to be lawful, Which were not so ; and to think, that They might innocently make use of those *pious Frauds*, for the Support and Interest of a Religion Which They knew to be *Divine*.

If it should be said, that believing the main Body of a History upon the *Character* of the Historian, as confirmed by *Others* ; is believing it, not upon *His* Authority or Credit, but upon the Authority of *Others* ; I ask, whether, if a Person be recommended to Me as a Man of a good Character ; and He gives Me an Account of some Transaction, Which I give Credit to, on Account of the Character I have received of Him ; I ask, whether I do not believe upon *His Authority*, be-
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cause I take His Character from Others? If not, an Historian's Authority is a very vague Thing indeed! — How do I believe any Thing, upon the Authority of any Man, but by believing it upon His Character? And how do I know His Character (unless I know the Man myself) but from the Testimony of Others? — If, therefore, believing an Historian upon His Character, be not believing the History upon His Authority; I know not how there can be believing upon any Writer's Authority at all; since it is His Character alone Which makes His Authority. — If all This be only the Authority of Him from Whom We take the Character; then, for the same Reason, We may be said to believe that Character given of the Historian, not upon the Authority of the Person Who gives it, but upon the Character Which I receive from Others of Him also, and so in infinitum. — To believe an Historian, therefore, upon the Credit of His Character, is believing upon His Authority. —

WHEREFORE, upon the Whole, if I believe the History of Christianity, given by Those Whose general Character of Piety and Honesty I am sufficiently assured of; I believe it upon Their Authority; and which Authority, in the main Body and Substance of the History, is not, in this Case, invalidated by my seeing Reason to think, that They may have been mistaken in the Liberty They are supposed to have taken, in Their Use of What They thought innocent Frauds, for the Support and Propagation of that Religion Which They are delivering down to Us; so long as I am satisfied,

from Their general moral Character, that, in the *main History*, in the *Religion itself*, in the *End* and *Design* of all, They would *not* deceive; and since, supposing This, I can nevertheless consistently account for the *other* Supposition; that They might, notwithstanding, make use of *false Miracles*, to carry on Their Work.

If it should be thought, that the same Way of reasoning may be employed to prove, that These *Fathers* may also have taken the Liberty of falsifying, in delivering down the Gospel-History, with regard to the *Miracles of Christ* and His *Apostles*; or that the *Evangelists* Themselves may have done the same; since These *Miracles* also (it may be said) may be looked on as the *Means* of *propagating* the Religion; — I answer, that the *Miracles* Which are reported by Them, of *Christ* and His *Apostles*, are reported as *Part* of the *original, primary, and fundamental Evidences* of Christianity, upon Which the *Truth of it depends*; they are considered, not merely as the *Means of propagating* it; but, as the *Foundation* upon Which it was erected. To have forged *such* *Miracles*, therefore, or to have delivered them down as *genuine*, knowing them to be *forged*, would have been, in Effect, to have forged the *Religion itself*: But This (as I have shewn) is inconsistent with the *general Character* of *Piety* and *Honesty*. Nor, for the same Reason, can We suppose that They would *add any false Miracles*, as the *Miracles of Christ* and His *Apostles*, to Those Which were *genuine*. For, as *all* the *Miracles* Which They have reported

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ed of Christ and His Apostles, are *all* equally reported by Them as Part of the *original, primary, fundamental Evidences* of Christianity; to suppose that They have *added false Miracles* to the *genuin*, is equally supposing Them to have been guilty of the Crime of *forging the original, primary, fundamental Evidence*: But forging the *original, primary, fundamental Evidence*, is forging the *Religion itself*. — But now the Miracles related of the Times *after the Apostles*, when (as the *Observer* rightly says) *the whole System of Faith was sealed up as compleat and perfect*; these pretended Miracles (supposing them such) were looked upon by the *Fathers*, as no more than the *Means* Which They thought it was lawful for Them to employ, in *spreading and propagating* the original History, the *Religion* Which They had received; but on *Which Miracles*, wheher true or false, the *Truth or Evidence of Christianity* could not depend (the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles, not any in After-ages, being, as the *Observer* admits, the *Foundation of the Faith**) Christianity having *Nothing to do* with them.

Secondly. Though We reject the *Authority of the Fathers*, in Their Accounts of *Miracles after the Days of the Apostles*; We shall not for that Reason be obliged also to reject *Their Authority* as to the *original History and Evidences of Christianity*, or Their *genuinly delivering down the same*; unless it can be proved, that an *Historian*, Who would not falsify in *one History*, would not therefore falsify in *another*,

* *Observ.* p. 30.

another, on Which the Truth of the former does not depend; and which Falshoods are of such a Kind, as not to be inconsistent with the general Character of honest, but mistaken Men. — I will take it for granted that *This cannot be proved*; Because it must first be proved, that an honest Man cannot mistake as to the Lawfulness or Innocence of a certain Conduct in one Case, of Which He sees the Unlawfulness and Impiety in another. — Now, the present Point may be reduced to the Case above-mentioned. — The original History and Evidences of Christianity, in the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles, is one; the History of the Miracles of the Fathers after the Days of the Apostles, is another; and therefore, although the Fathers would not falsify in relation to the former History, where They could not but see the Unlawfulness and Impiety of it; it cannot be proved, that They would not falsify in the latter, on Which the Truth of the former does not depend; and in such Particulars, where They may be supposed not to see the Unlawfulness or Impiety of such Conduct. — And therefore, the rejecting Their Authority in one History, where We can suppose They might falsify; will not afford Ground for the Conclusion, that therefore We must reject also Their Authority in another History, in Which We can suppose, consistently, that They would not make use of the like Conduct.

Thirdly. We shall not be obliged to reject the Authority of the Fathers as to the original History and Evidences of Christianity, as delivered down
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to Us in the Sacred Writings, though We reject Their Authority in Their Accounts of Miracles after the Days of the Apostles; if it appear, that They Themselves have given a greater Proof of Their Sincerity and Truth in respect to the former, than They have in regard to the latter. — Now, that They were sincere in Their Profession of Christianity, in Their Belief of the original History and Evidences of it; They have given such Testimony as sets Them above all Suspicion of Fraud or Imposture; the greatest Pledge (as the Observer Himself calls it) that Human Faith can give. — They died in Attestation to the Truth of Christianity; and to the Truth of Christianity as delivered in the Books of Scripture, the original History and Evidence of it. — These Books They deliver down as such. — So that dying in Testimony to the Truth of Christianity, is, in Effect and Reality, dying in Testimony to the Authenticity of the Books of Scripture, in Which alone They profess this Religion to be contained. But Who of Them died in Attestation to the Truth of any Miracle after the Days of the Apostles? — This makes a great Difference in the two Cases, by the Observer's own Confession. ‘ Who (says He) laid down His Life in Testimony to any Miracle wrought in After-ages? No-body. Martyrs there were in After-ages; But They were not Martyrs to new Miracles, but to the Christian Faith, as it stood upon the Miracles wrought by Christ and His Apostles.’ — Their Authority, therefore, may be depended upon in one Case, tho’ it

it may not in *another*. — And no Man can argue, that We must, or may reasonably, reject the Authority of a Writer, in Things *accompanied with the greatest Pledge that human Faith can give*; because We reject His Authority in Things Which *have not such Testimony* to demand Our Assent.

BUT to conclude this Point — I would ask these Gentlemen — Do They, or do They not, believe the Truth of all the *Miracles*, reported by these Fathers as true, after the Days of the Apostles? — If They do *not*, They must impute them either to *Credulity*, or to *Forgery*, in the Reporters. — But to which soever of these They shall impute them, the Difficulty will lie upon *Themselves*. — For (however strange the Assertion may seem at first hearing, yet) I think I may venture to say, that *Superstition* and *Credulity* will affect (though not the *moral Character*, yet) the *Credit* and *Authority* of an Historian, *as much*, if not *more*, than *Forgery* itself.

THE Historian Who ventures to *forge*, will, however, be *cautious* how He makes use of *such a Liberty*; and, as He hath His *Reason* and *Thoughts* about Him, He will do it but sparingly, or now and then, and in a few particular Instances; being *suspicious* of being *detected*, and *anxious* and *provident* for the *Credit* of His History. But the *superstitious, credulous* Historian is *off his Guard*: For, as He *believes* all *Himself*, He sees no Reason Others should *not believe* too; and therefore hath no Scruple of relating *Whatever His own Faith extends to*, careless of the *Number* or *natural Incredibility* of His Relations; and therefore no wonder, if

if the History of a *credulous, superstitious* Man should consist of little else but such Accounts. — The Author of the *Observations*, speaking of the *Fathers*, says — ‘ We want not Their *Judgment*, but Their *Integrity*. We admit Them, not as authoritative Teachers, but as *faithful Witnesses*.’ A strange *Observation* This, surely! — What! is not *Judgment*, as well as *Integrity*, necessary to the *Credit* of a Witness even in Matters of Fact? — May not a Man have the greatest possible *Integrity*; and yet, if He have *no Judgment*, be deceived in a thousand Instances even of Matters of Fact? — Would not a *common Jugler* be able with Ease to *impose* upon a Man of the *greatest Integrity*; if He were a *weak Man*, and of *little Judgment*? — I must therefore take upon Me to assert, though in Contradiction to this Writer, that there is required, in a *credible Witness*, even to Matters of Fact, the Qualification of *Judgment*, as well as *Integrity* — especially in Transactions Which savour of the *marvellous*: And therefore, a *superstitious, credulous* Historian, let Him be of ever so great *Integrity*, wanting *Judgment*, is no more a *credible Witness* than the Writer Who is guilty of *Forgery*. As to myself, I must own, I do not see that either *Credulity*, or *Forgery*, of a certain Kind, and in Things of a particular Nature, do so far affect the *Credibility* of an History, but that it may, nevertheless, be depended upon in *other Parts*, and as to the *main Body* of it, upon sufficient Reasons of

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Credibility : But I think I do see, that the *Credibility* of an History may be affected by *Superstition* and *Credulity*, as much, at least, as by *Forgery*.

Now therefore I repeat. — Do these Writers believe the Truth of all the *Miracles* reported as true by these *Fathers*, after the Days of the Apostles ; or do They *not* believe them ? — If They do *not* ; then, whether They impute them to *Forgery* or to *Credulity*, the *Difficulty* Which They would fix upon Others, in relation to the Truth and Credibility of the *Gospel-History*, will, in Reality, lie upon *Themselves only*. — For, if They Themselves do *not* believe the Truth of all these *Miracles*, but impute them to *Forgery* or *Credulity* in these *Fathers* ; then, They must either say, that the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History*, and *Authenticity* of the *Scriptures*, do *not* depend upon the Authority or Testimony of *These Fathers* : or otherwise, if They will stand to it, that the Truth and Credibility of the *Gospel-History*, and *Authenticity* of the Books of Scripture, do depend only upon these same *Fathers* ; and that They are the *only authentic Testimony* of the *Gospels* and *Epistles* (as the *Opener* expressly asserts) ; then They must either admit, upon Their own Principles, that We really have *no sufficient Authority* for the *Reception* of the *Scriptures*, and the Truth of the *Gospel-History* ; or else They must allow, that *discrediting* the *Authority* of these *Fathers*, in Their Reports of *Miracles* after the Days of the Apostles (Which is one Particular of Their History) if they stand not upon sufficient Evidence ; does not so far *invalidate* Their

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Their *Testimony* and Authority in other Cases, but that They may still be esteemed nevertheless, good and *sufficient Witnesses* for the *Truth* of the *main Body* of Their Accounts; the *History* in general, and the *genuin Reception* of the *Scriptures*. — There is no *Medium*. And therefore, if these Gentlemen do not believe all the Miracles reported after the Days of the Apostles, They must *answer Themselves*; and if they do believe them, it will not be worth Any-body's while to *answer Them at all*.

I WILL only add, that, if What has been said, be not sufficient to shew, that We are not obliged to discredit the *main Body* of an History, on Account of some *Forgeries* therein; it will follow, that no History, wherein any *false Stories* are delivered *as true*, is to be believed even in the main Body of it, or stands upon any credible Authority: For I have shewn, that *Credulity* affects the *Credit* of an Historian, as much as *Forgery*. — And what Destruction will This make with all Histories, ancient and modern? — *Josephus's* Account of the *Apples of Sodom*, and *Echard's* Story of *Oliver Cromwell and the Devil*, will ruin *Their* Credit, and demolish *those* Histories at once. The like may be said of most other Historians; 'till, in the End, We must believe Nothing but what We see Ourselves; and the *History* of every Man's *own Times* (except *Bishop Burnet's*) will be the only credible Histories.

I HAVE now gone through the *Observer's* *Exceptions* to the *Introductory Discourse*. —

As to the *Fact*; Whether there be sufficient Reason to believe, upon the Authority of the *Fathers*, that Miraculous Powers were continued to the Church after the Age of the Apostles; or Whether there be not; I do not here take upon Me to determine, or enquire; my only Intention being to shew, that, so far as the *Observations* go, and the Arguments of Those Other Writers Whom I have occasionally examined, the *Introductory Discourse* is not affected; and to remove all *Prejudices* on both Sides, *Which otherwise* (as the *Observer* justly remarks) *may with Many predetermine the Cause, before it comes to a fair Hearing.* — Let the *Fact* be fairly tried; and Where the *Truth* shall appear, let it be embraced, without any Regard to *common Opinions*, or *Prejudices*, on one Side or the other. — Let the *Primitive Fathers* have all the Honour and Regard paid to Them, due to Their Merit; as, in general, and for the most part, excellent Men, pious, virtuous, and competently learned for the Times They lived in. — We should, in this Case, procede with Caution. — On the one hand, We should not *exaggerate* the Faults, or Errors, of the *Fathers*; nor, on the other, pay such a *superstitious Veneration* to Them, as to look upon Them to be free from all *Vices* and *Errors*; and Their Writings to be all (as *Horace* complains the *Verses* of the *Primitive Poets*, because *ancient*, were esteemed in His Days to be)

— *exaltis minimum distantia.* —

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The *middle Way* is right — to attribute neither *too much*, nor *too little* to Their Authority; and to be cautious, that, while We do not throw off all that proper Regard and Deference to Them, Which is Their due; We do not, on the contrary, so *implicitly* rely upon Them, as to do Injury to the *Truth*, Which ought to have our *principal Veneration*, in Opposition to *all Authority* inconsistent with it'.

As to the *Consequences* of the *Opinion* and *Arguments* of the *Introductory Discourse* to the Disadvantage of the *Truth*, or *Support of Christianity*, or the *Gospel-History*; though the *Observer* has, in some Parts of His Performance, represented them as admitting of *obvious Inferences* in Derogation from the *Miracles of Christ and His Apostles*; yet, in other Places, He has given up that Point; by confessing, that He cannot see that this Question hath any Thing to do with the Defence of Christianity — and that if there be not so much as one Miracle upon Record, since the Days of the Apostles, sufficiently attested, Christianity hath nothing to do with it — Which stands not upon the *new Miracles* of the *Fathers* of the fourth, the third, or the second Century; but upon the *old*

ones
Tān immutabilis Veritas est, ut cujusvis Patris Auctoritas efficere non possit, ut verum sit id quod falsum est, & falsum esse, quod certissimis Monumentis comprobatur, ut factum sit, quod factum non esse ipsis, ut ita loquar, solis radiis demonstratur. *Nat. Alexand. Hist. Ecclesiast. Sæc. ii. Dissert. 1.*

Laudanda utique Modestia, nec omnis erga Veteres istos Ecclesiæ Doctores, quibus multa debemus, abjicienda Veneratio; sed adæquate simul, diligenterque dispiciendum, ne, dum Modestii videri volumus, in Veritatem sumus injurii. — *J. F. Budæi Isagog. ad Theolog. — Tom. 1. p. 343.*

134 *View of the Controversy*

'ones of *Christ and His Apostles*.' — And after all the Clamour Which hath been raised, it subsides in This only at last — How far the Supposition, that Some of the *Primitive Fathers* have either forged Miracles, or related them as true knowing them to be forged, may affect *Their Historical Credit* in other Things, as to the *main Body* of Their History; or, Whether it can destroy the Evidence for the Truth and Credibility of the Gospel-History, and the Authority of the Books of Scripture. — If What hath been said as to these Points in the foregoing Papers, shall be thought sufficient, or capable of being improved upon, to clear this seeming Difficulty; I see not What the *Observer* can have to object to the Author's Attempt; but only how well, or how ill, the Truth of His Opinion, as to the *Matter of Fact*, may be supported; after having thus granted (though in Contradiction to Himself) that, as to any ill Consequences, any obvious Inferences Which may follow from the Fact, supposing the Truth of it to be established, *Christianity bath nothing to do with it*.

As to any farther *secret Intention* or *Design*, Which the *Observer* insinuates to lie at Bottom of the *Introductory Discourse*; I shall leave it for Those to dive after, Who are skill'd in that way — and shall only say, that if the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* had any *Design*, that His Opinions or Arguments should be extended to the Disadvantage of *Christianity*; these Papers may be looked upon as an Answer, so far, to the *Introductory Discourse*; by shewing, that if such were the *secret Design* and Intention

concerning Miraculous Powers. 135

Intention of it, it would really fail of it's End; since the Opinions and Arguments there advanced, pursued through all their various Conclusions, leave the *Truth* and *Credibility* of the *Gospel-History*, and the Testimony and Authority of the *Genuineness* of the *Books of Scripture*, safe and unaffected. —But if the Author had *no such sinister End* in View; then these Papers are a *Vindication* of the Opinion and Arguments of the *Introductory Discourse*, from those *ill Consequences*, Which the *Observer* and *Others* have charged them with.—They tell Us, that they are such, as may tend to enervate the Evidence for the *Gospel-History*, and the Authority of the *Scriptures*. —I thought so, 'till I read these *Gentlemen's Performances*; But my Doubts lessened with every Page; And if They should oblige the World again upon the Subject, No-body perhaps may doubt any longer about it.—'Tis the Observation of a celebrated Writer, that 'the next Happiness to being
' *very well defended*, is That of being *very weakly
' opposed*.'



P O S T.

intention of it, it would really fail of its End :
since the Opinions and Arguments there advanced,
perished through all their various Conclusions, leave
the Firm and Credibility of the Gospel History, and
the Testimony and Authority of the Commanders of
the Church of God, safe and unshaken. — But if
the Author had not seen further & in View ; then
these Papers are a Foundation of the Opinion and
Arguments of the Learned Dissenters from those
in Consensus. Which the Observer and Observer
have charged them with — They tell us, that they
are such, as may tend to enervate the Evidence for
the Gospel-History, and the Authority of the Scrip-
tures — I thought so, till I read these Gentlemen's
Performance : But my Doubts lessened with every
Page : And if they should collige the World again
upon the Subject. No body perhaps may doubt
any longer about it. — 'Tis the Observation of a co-
laboured Writer, that ' the next Happiness to being
' very well debated, is that of being very easily
' resolved.



POSTSCRIPT.

I Have just read over a declamatory *Latin* Treatise, intituled, *Defensio Miraculorum, Quæ in Ecclesia Christiana facta esse perhibentur post Tempora Apostolorum*^a. Which, as far as it relates to Points considered in the foregoing Papers, may not be improper for Me to take notice of.

Defensio Miraculorum, p. 3.

AGAINST that Principle of the *Introductory Discourse*, viz. that ‘ whenever any sacred Rite ‘ becomes the Instrument of real Miracles, We ‘ ought to consider that Rite, as confirmed by ‘ Divine Approbation ’ — the learned Author says — *Si quo Deus voluerit improbiſſimo Homine uti tanquam Instrumento in Rerum Administratione (quod interdum factum est) illudnè sequitur justâ aliquâ Conclusionem Rationis, Deum ob hanc Causam Posteritati velle commendare istius Hominis Improbisatem?* — This is the same *Jumble of Ideas*, or *Argument*, commonly so called, made use of by Dr. *Claget*, and the Author of the *Observations*; Which I have already unravel’d, *p. 37, &c.* — The Reader has there seen how it looks in *English*; and perhaps

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^a Quam in Scholis Theologicis Cantabrigiæ Januarii XXI. M. DC. XL. VII. suscepit, cum pro Gradu Baccalaureatus in Sacra Theologia solenniter responderet, ZACHARIAS BROOKE, A. M. Coll. D. Joannis Socius.

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He will not think that it makes any better Figure in *Latin*.—

Defens. p. 3, 4.

HE asks— ‘ Whether, if We suppose that God
‘ permitted the *Magicians of Ægypt* to work true
‘ Miracles ; We can thence infer any Confirmati-
‘ on of *Magic Arts* ? ^b ’—

THE Question in the present Debate is ; Whe-
ther a *Divine Miracle*, properly so called, wrought
through any Rite, by Which *God is applied to* for
that Purpose ; and where *no Mark* is given of His
Disapprobation—Whether a Miracle, so circum-
stanced, will not *infer the Divine Approbation* of the
Rite, so far as it goes, as *innocent* and *lawful*.
Conf. View, p. 11, 14, 15. But, in the present In-
stance, there is not any one of these Circumstances.
—The Miracles, though supposed to be *true* Mi-
racles, were not properly *Divine Miracles* ; Mi-
racles wrought by the Power of God (any other-
wise than as all Power is from Him) and therefore
cannot infer the *Divine Approbation*, or Confir-
mation of the Lawfulness or Innocence of those
Rites, or *Arts* through Which they were wrought.
—The *Magicians* acknowledged to *Pharaoh*, that
the Miracles wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron* were
the

^b Si illud etiam ponas (quod quidem videtur non multum distare abs Re ipsâ atque à Veritate) Deum, quò melius suam demonstraret Potestatem, permisisse olim ut à Magis Ægyptiacis coram Mose ipsorumque Principe vera ederentur Miracula ; num ergo putas Artes Magicas ullo modo inde confirmari, majorivè in Existimatione apud Homines debere esse ?

the Finger of God; implying *Their own* to be not so. *Gen. viii. 19.* — Nor were these Miracles wrought by any Rites, through Which Application was made to *God* for them; but (by Supposition) only to *Magic Arts*, or *Evil Spirits*: And therefore the Success of those Arts, proves only the *Divine Permission* of that Success, in order to shew forth His own superior Power, in Opposition thereto. — For there was, in this Instance, an evident *Mark* of the *Divine Disapprobation* of the *Magicians*, and *Their Arts*. This learned Author Himself takes notice of a Circumstance, Which is alone a sufficient Reason, why Nothing, in favour of *Magic Arts*, can be concluded from hence, viz. ‘that ‘God permitted these *Magic Powers* to work *Miracles*, in order to manifest His own superior ‘Power,’ by greater Miracles: The Event of Which must be, not the *approving* or *recommending* such Arts; but the *confounding*, and *destroying their Reputation*; a plain *Mark* of His *Disapprobation*; as the Author of the Book of *Wisdom* expressly observes upon the Case. *As for the Illusions* (says He) *of Art Magic*, they were put down, and their vaunting in *Wisdom* was reprov’d with Disgrace. — xvii. 7. — So that this Instance of the *Ægyptian Magicians*, has no manner of relation to the present Debate; and therefore I shall dismiss Them to take Their Fortune, in proper Company, the *Examiner’s Evil Spirits*, and *My Friend’s Witch of Endor*.

LET us now see whether this Author has any better Luck with His other Instances. —

Defens. p. 4.

He tells Us of the Person thrown into *Elisba's* Sepulchre, and reviving by the Touch of the Bones of that Prophet^c: He mentions the *Brazen Serpent*, by looking on Which, the *Israelites* were preserved in the Wilderness^d; the Cures which followed from the Touch of *Christ's* Garments^e; and the Handkerchiefs and Aprons carried from *St. Paul's* Body^f: He refers to Those cured by anointing with Oil^g; and by the Shadow of *St. Peter*^h. — And He argues — that since We credit all these Miracles upon the Authority of Scripture; and yet do not pretend that any *Rites* can from hence be deduced or instituted, Which can, with any Reason, *encourage Superstition*; Why may We not, in like manner, grant, that in the Ages *succeeding* the Apostles, *Miracles* were performed by the Reliques of Martyrs, the Sign of the Cross, and Unction with Oil; and yet, consistently, charge the *Romanists* with *Superstition*, in worshipping the Reliques of Martyrs, in Their Use of the Sign of the Cross, and of Unction? — Where (says He) is the Inconsistency in This? ⁱ.

—WHETHER

^c 2 Kings xiii. 21.

^d Numb. xxi. 8, 9.

^e Math. ix. 20, 22. xiv, 36.

^f Acts xix. 12.

^g Mark vi. 13. James v. 14, 15.

^h Acts v. 15, 16.

ⁱ Hisce omnibus Fidem adhibendam esse censemus ex Sacram Literarum Auctoritate; neque tamen judicamus ullos omnino Ritus ex istis Rebus deducendos esse instituendosque, qui aliquâ Ratione possent Superstitionem Vulgi alere & fovere. Quidni igitur concederemus et iis Temporibus, quæ sunt Apostolorum Tempora continuo subsecuta, per ossa Reliquiasque Martyrum, per Signum Crucis, per Olei Unctionem mirificam

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—WHETHER the Worship of Reliques, in the high Sense of *Worship*, can be inferr'd from *Miracles* admitted to have been wrought by them; I have already shewn has nothing to do with the Principle, or Argument of the *Introductory Discourse*. Conf. View, p. 18, 19.

THIS therefore being to be thrown out of this learned Gentleman's Argument, as having nothing to do in the Debate; the Difference between the two Cases He has put is very obvious — A Difference, between arguing from the *Powers* of *Christ and His Apostles*, to the *like Powers* in *any Other Persons*, of any Age whatsoever; and arguing only, among the Ages *after* the Apostles, from *one of those* Ages to *another*; where there is no such eminent Distinction between the Dignity and Character of the Persons; as there is between Those of *any Age*, and *Christ and His Apostles*.

THAT the *Apostles* had the *Powers* of *working Miracles*, *expressly* and *immediately* given them; We know from the Authority of Holy Scripture (a common Principle, agreed upon by both Sides). We know This, abstractedly considered from the Miracles themselves. We know it *à priori*. Therefore, no Inference will lie, from *Those* Who We know had these Powers *expressly* given Them; to

Any

cam quandam Potentiam apparuisse in sanandis Ægrotationibus, excitandisque etiam à Morte Hominibus; quidni, inquam, hoc concederemus, cum tamen iidem illud affirmaremus Romanenses in Reliquiis Martyrum adorandis, in utendo Crucis Signo, Oleoque adhibendo nimium fuisse olim & jam etiam esse superstitiosos? Ecqua est enim istæ, quam Quidam suspicantur, nostrorum Hominum his in Rebus Inconstantia?

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Any Others, where *this Circumstance* is either wanting, or not known.

BUT, in the other Case, We know Nothing of any *express Powers immediately given to Any Persons in After-ages*. The only Authority for *Their* having had such Powers, is the Authority of the *Miracles supposed* to have been wrought by Them. Here therefore All stand, so far, upon a Level: And therefore, the Inference is more reasonable from *any Age after the Apostles, to another*; as Nothing is necessary to make *Their* several Pretensions to such Powers equal, but the Authority of the *Miracles* themselves.

So that the *Inconsistency*, Which our learned Author enquires after, is; the *admitting Miracles* to have been wrought by *certain Rites, in some Ages* of the Church, in Which it cannot be proved that there were *any more Reasons à priori* to expect *Miracles from such Rites*, than in *those Ages Which succeeded*; and yet charging Others with *Superstition*, in the like Use of such Rites, in *those succeeding Ages*: And from hence He may easily find a Solution of His Difficulty — Why admitting the Miracles of *Christ* and His *Apostles* will give no Encouragement to Superstition; while admitting the Miracles reported to have been wrought by *Reliques &c. in After-ages*, will.—The Difference of the two Cases is so plain, that if Any-one cannot see it, it will be in vain to apply to *Bertrand* for any *Spectacles* to help His Eye-sight.

Defens.

Defens. p. 4, 5.

BUT the Instance Which this learned Disputant seems to be most fond of, is That of the *Brazen Serpent*; an Instance, 'than Which He thinks 'none can be more in point^k.'—He 'desires His 'Auditors to take notice of it, and consider it^l. And if They did so, I dare say They thought it as little to the Purpose, as I do; and it might not have been amiss, if He had let us known in the *Margin* (if He could have spared room) What the learned Person in the *Divinity Chair* had said to it. But having displayed the *History* of it; He thinks That alone sufficient to strike All Adversaries dumb at once: For, before He has said one single Syllable by way of *Argument*, or to tell us What He would be at; He calls out upon All *Obtrectatores*, and defies Them to say a Word against Him, or the *Brazen Serpent* Which He has set up; as if the mere looking upon it, were sufficient to preserve Him now, as it did the *Israelites* formerly.—*Num Quid est itaque, quod queant nostrorum Hominum Obtrectatores in Animum inducere contra Hæc quæ à Me disputantur, dicere?* p. 5. And so, with great Self-Complacency, salutes the Spectators, and (with other great Heroes) vanquishes All Antagonists, with the *Flourish of His Weapons*.—But, soft, and fair! A Triumph makes but a mean

^k Quæ Re Nihil sanè est, quod ad Hoc, de quo disputo, vel fingi possit accommodatius, p. 4.

^l Animadvertite quæso paulisper, Academici, et cogitate mecum Serpentis Ænei Historiam. *ibid.*

mean Appearance, without Captives to grace it. — *French* Customs should be prohibited as well as *French* Merchandize; and We should not be so hasty to sing *Te Deum*, before We are assured that others will allow Us the *Victory*, as well as Ourselves. — Let us accept this Gentleman's Challenge.

HIS whole Force is — 'That We shall destroy
' the Credit of the *Miracles* of the *Brazen Serpent*,
— Why? — 'Because it was at length *superstitiously*
honoured m.'

— *Imperatoris Virtutem noveram, et Vim Militum!*

THE *Argument* of the *Introductory Discourse*, is; 'that, by admitting *Miracles* to have been wrought by *Reliques*, &c. in the Ages after the Apostles; We shall give Advantage to the *Superstition* of the *Church of Rome*.' The *Principle* to support This, is; that, 'Whenever any Sacred Rite, or Religious Institution, becomes the Instrument of real [Divine] *Miracles*; We ought to consider *that Rite* as confirmed by *Divine Approbation*,' as to the *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* of it; since This will give sufficient *Advantage* to the *Church of Rome*. Vid. *View*, p. 9. 18, 19. — Now it will appear, that, from *this Principle*, We shall be under no Obligation to deny the *Miracles* Which this Writer refers to; notwithstanding the *Rite* may have been afterwards abused to *Superstition*; provided, it was not superstitious and unlawful, in its first Use; Which

m Defens. p. 5.

Which is the *Circumstance* that makes the *Difference* (as will be seen) between the Case of *these Miracles* here refer'd to, and *That* of the Miracles admitted *after the Days of the Apostles*, as to the *Conclusion* to be drawn from thence, to the *Advantage of the Church of Rome*.

THE *Brazen Serpent* was erected by *Moses*, at *God's Command*, for the *Preservation* of the *Israelites* from a *then present Calamity*.—It was plainly instituted as a mere *temporary Rite*; and, accordingly, when the *Calamity* ceased, its *Virtue* ceased with it, and its *Use* evidently appeared to be at an *End*. Therefore, no more can be infer'd from *this Instance*, than the *then present Innocence* and *Lawfulness of the Rite*, as confirmed by *Divine Approbation*: And Nothing more, than that the *Rite* was confirmed by *Divine Approbation*, are We obliged to assert, by our *Principle*, in admitting the *Miracles*; or in support of our *Argument*, that, admitting the *Miracles* reported of the *Times after the Apostles*, will give *Advantage to the Church of Rome?* For the Reason why We cannot extend the *Lawfulness* and *Innocence* of the *Rite of the Brazen Serpent* (as We do the others) to any *After-times*, is; Because it was a *temporary Rite only*, expressly instituted for, and appropriated to, that particular *Occasion*.—Whereas, the *Rites*, by Which *Miracles* are reported to have been wrought by *Reliques*, &c. *after the Age of the Apostles*, were not *Rites* expressly instituted by *God*, or appropriated to any particular, or *temporary Occasion*; but *Rites*, applied to only from the *Religion*,

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and mere Motion of the People: And if yet, these Rites received the *Divine Approbation* by Miracles then; and were (as the Rite of the *Brazen Serpent* was), lawful and innocent in their first Use; there was Nothing in the Nature of the Rites themselves, to confine the Innocence and Lawfulness of the Use of them to those particular Times. → To urge the Necessity or Expediency of them, from the then State of the Church and Christianity, will not do: Because, if there has not been the same, or so great Necessity or Expediency since; yet, it cannot be proved, that there has not been any Necessity or Expediency, any Use sufficient to authorize the Expectation of Miracles through the same Rites; if We admit Miracles after the Age of the Apostles; and there be no other Reason against such Expectation, but the supposed Want of any Expediency of Use which they might serve.

If our Adversaries admit, that the Rites were (as the Rite of the *Brazen Serpent* was), innocent and lawful in their first Use; then They will have no Occasion for Their Distinction, of admitting the Miracles, and yet denying the Use of the Rites to have been confirmed thereby as innocent and lawful; but may as well assert the latter, as admit the former (*Conf. View*, p. 21.) But then, They cannot, consistently, charge the Romanists with Superstition, in the same Use of such Rites; and This would be giving up the Conclusion We contend for. For, if these Rites were lawful in their first Use; then, there being Nothing in the Nature of them, or in the Occasion,

tion, to confine the Lawfulness of them to *those particular Times*; the Romanists cannot be guilty of *Superstition* in making the *same Use* of those Rites afterwards, so far as they went, Which is sufficient to the Argument. *Vid. Vireo*, p. 18, 19. — But if these Rites were *not* innocent and lawful in their *first Use* (as it appears our Adversaries, by the Nature of their Defense, must grant) as the Rite of the *Braken Serpent* was; then, the denying the Divine Approbation by Miracles, to have been given to the *one*, will not oblige Us to deny the same of the *other*. So that the Cases are, no way, parallel; and the learned Author's Instance of the *Braken Serpent*, has the same Fate with his *Egyptian Magicians*, of being Nothing to the Purpose. — He has indeed made a pompous Shew with His Argument drawn from it; Which yet, when examined, appears to be but a very poor one; and while He would extol it, to be gazed at, and admired by the Multitude, like the *Braken Serpent* He is treating of; it does, in Reality, like the *real one*, only creep upon the Ground.

Defens. P. 23, 24. 26, 27. 36. 41.

He wonders, that there should be Any one, Who can think that there is so great a Difference between the Credibility or Authority of the Miracles reported by the Primitive Fathers; and those of Christ and His Apostles; For, that He sees no Difference at all. And I wonder in my Turn, that He itaque mirari satis non possam esse Quenquam, Qui sibi persuadeat inter Credibilitatem Miraculorum quæ ab his primævis Scriptoris ecclesiasticis memorantur, eorumque quæ comparant

that there can be Any-one, Who would venture to maintain such a Principle. And now We are in the Way of wondering, I shall take the Liberty of one Wonder more: And That is, at this Writer's odd Method of defending His Opinion.—He says; that ‘almost all the *Miracles of the Apostles*, depend upon the Authority of *St. Luke only*; and ‘Which He had, for the most Part, only by ‘*Hear-say from St. Paul*: Whereas, the *Miracles* ‘reported by the *Primitive Fathers*, stand not upon ‘the Testimony of *One*, but of *Many*; and of ‘Such Who had *seen them Themselves*’. The Consequence of which Argument is; not that the *Miracles of the Fathers* are as credible, and of as good Authority, as *those of the Apostles*; but, that they are *much more* credible, and stand upon *much better* Authority.—I dare say that every prudent Man, Who wishes well to the Cause of Christianity, will hope that there is some Flaw in this Argument; and, indeed, it is Nothing but a mere Fallacy.

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comparent in *Historia Evangelica*, *Discrimen esse maximum*, quod Ipse Ego video *plane esse nullum*. Vellem equidem isti Homines, Qui nostrae Cause adversantur, perfecissent tandem quod se perfecisse jaetitant, *Miracula Christi ejusque Apostolorum majori nobis commendari Fide atque Auctoritate*, quam *Miracula istorum Patrum primavorum*, Quos antea memoravimus. p. 23, 24.

° *Miracula Apostolorum fere omnia unius Divi Lucae Auctoritate innituntur; et sunt ejusmodi, quae maximam ex Parte ipse non viderat, sed quae ab Apostolo Paulo Auditione acceperat. Miracula autem, quae Patres primae Memoriae prodiderunt, non Unius sed Plurium Testimonia credenda sunt, eorumque quidem Hominum, Qui praesentes eo Oculis intuebantur.*

p. 27.

Most of the Miracles of the Apostles (says He) depend upon the Authority of St. *Luke* only.
 —Why?—Because St. *Luke* only is the Historian.
 —Not to insist here, that St. *Mark* gives His Testimony, in general, to the Miracles of the Apostles, C. xvi. 20; This Gentleman should have remember'd, that, though St. *Luke* were the only *Historian*; yet, that the Authority of the Books of Scripture, of Which This History is Part, stands not upon the Evidence of *One*, but of *Many*; and of *Many* more than the Miracles of the Primitive Fathers do. The Testimony of St. *Luke*, and the Credit of His History, have been witnessed to, and authenticated, by having been received as genuine and unexceptionable, by all *Ages*, *Nations*, and *Churches*, from the Time of the first Publication, down even to the present: And therefore, this History stands not upon the *single Authority* of St. *Luke* (as this Writer pretends) but upon That of all succeeding *Ages*. —Does it appear, that the *Miracles of the Fathers* were as universally, perpetually, and unexceptionably received, as St. *Luke's History* of the *Miracles of the Apostles*? —If not, How does this Writer make it out, that the *Miracles of the Primitive Fathers*, stand upon more Evidence than the *Miracles of the Apostles*? —To say therefore, that the *Miracles of the Apostles* stand upon the Evidence of St. *Luke* only; and the *Miracles of the Fathers* upon the Evidence of *Many*; is only endeavouring to impose upon Us, by a Kind of *Legerdemain*. —But the Trick is found out; and St. *Luke's History* being better attested upon the Whole,
 and

and having the uninterrupted Evidence of all Succeeding Ages and Churches; becomes, not the Evidence of *One Person only*, but of *Many*; and stands upon *more*, and *better Evidence* than the Miracles of the Fathers.

BUT (and Which is the last Thing I have occasion to take notice of in this Gentleman's learned Performance) as We are told by Him, that the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles, are *not at all more credible* than those of the Primitive Fathers; so, to make all of a Piece, He asserts also, that 'there is no other way of proving the Truth and Authenticity of the *Books of Scripture*, than by the Authority of These Writers; Whom yet We will not believe, even in those Things, of Which They affirm Themselves to have been Eye-Witnesses.'—that 'the *Gospel-History*, and the *Miracles reported of the Primitive Ages of the Church*, depend entirely upon the same Authority'; and that 'they must stand or fall together.'

I have already, I hope, sufficiently cleared this Question; and shall content myself with referring to What is there said, and trust it to the Reader.

Vid.

Nec enim alia quævis datus probandi Ratio sacros hos Codices aut veros et germanos esse, aut integros incorruptosque ad Nos devenisse, quam horum Scriptorum Auctoritate; Quos eadem ut Homines contendunt tam pravo tamque imbecilli fuisse Animo, ut omnino credendi non sint vel istis in Rebus; quas omni Asseveratione affirmant se vidisse suo Tempore gestas esse. p. 36.

Historia Evangelica et Miracula, quæ in prioribus Ecclesiæ Christianæ sæculis facta esse penhibentur, omnino pendent ex eorundem Hominum Auctoritate. Neque, &c.—Ruere itaque illa non possunt, ut hæc utraque [Scilicet Historia Evangelica et Paganica] non eodem labefacta motu concidant. p. 41.

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Vid. View, p. 111—116. But I cannot let these Principles pass here, without some Notice.

THE *Observer* says, there is one Sense in 'Which Christianity may be affected by this Dispute.' — There is so indeed: But not so much, as the Credit of the Fathers may be affected, by Our questioning the Truth of Their Miracles (as He argues); as that the Credit of the Gospel-History is directly affected, by putting the Credit of it upon an Equality with those Miracles; as is done by our learned Disputant, and the Author of the *Jesuit-Cabal* farther opened. — One would think, that the Cabal was rather between these Gentlemen; if We were to judge only from these Principles Which They patronize: And should be apt to imagine, that if this Cabal were farther opened, as well as That of the *Jesuits*, it might appear to be a Cabal, not indeed against the *Jesuits* and the *Apostles*, but against Those of a much higher, and more sacred Character, against St. Luke and St. Paul, against Christ and His Apostles; and the Authority of Both the Testaments.

These Writers, I am sensible, could have no such Design: Who, I dare say, are sincerely well affected to Christianity, and the Protestant Religion; But (to use the *Observer's* Words) like some other great Masters of late, happen to be a little mistaken in Their Method of serving Them.

To put the Truth of the Gospel-History, and the Truth of the Miracles reported by the Fathers, upon the same Footing; and to admit, nay contend, that they must stand or fall together; are Principles in Support

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Support of Christianity, Which, I own, I do not understand the Force of.—The *Observer* is more cautious, and more prudent, than rashly to throw out such indefensible Propositions; and to leave all at stake, and to rest the Issue upon the Event of this single Enquiry; ‘Whether the Miracles reported by the Fathers, were true.’—The *Observer* says only, that ‘Christianity may be affected by this Dispute, as the Credit of the ancient Fathers may be affected by it:’ And This, only upon Supposition, that the Fathers were ‘Impostors and Forgers of Lies:’ For, that then, ‘the Consequences may go a great way:’ And He fairly and justly admits, that ‘there is a great Difference between the Miracles wrought by Christ and His Apostles, and the Miracles of later Ages; as in Point of Importance, so also in Point of Evidence:’—The *Opener* of the *Jesuit-Cabal* ventures farther, and asserts, that the ‘only authentic Testimony that We have to the New Testament, is the Testimony of the Primitive Christian Writers, Whose Credit is destroyed by the System of the *Introductory Discourse*; and He insinuates, ‘that We shall have no authentic Testimony left to the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles.’—But our learned *Disputant* here, plunges out of his Depth at once; and, with a precipitate Temerity, roundly asserts, ‘that the Miracles of Christ and His Apostles, and Those reported by the Primitive Fathers, are equally credible, depend upon the same Authority, and must stand or fall together.—’

Observ. p. 32, 33. and 36.

Jesuit Cabal, &c. p. 45.

IF

POSTSCRIPT 153

If the Author of the *Introductory Discourse* had any such sinister Design, as these Gentlemen imagine; They may expect to receive His Thanks for such a Concession; and will perhaps be thought, by the Rest of the World, to have done more Harm than Good, by *such an Opposition*.—Had these Principles come from the *Tolands* and the *Tindals* of our Days; they might have been smiled at, and passed by.—It would have been no more than might have been expected.—But, when the *same Principles* are sent forth from *Lambeth*, and a *University*, they become serious; and, at the same time, give Us no very high Opinion of the Skill and Abilities of such Defenders of the Christian Church: Who, instead of carrying on the Building, where our great Master first founded it, *upon a Rock*; are for removing it, and building it (as the foolish Man is said to build his House) *upon the Sand*. — Or, as if *Christianity*, instead of being trusted to the *known Impregnability* of its proper *Fortifications*; was, like a *Dutch Town*, agreed to be surrender'd to the Enemy, *upon Condition*, that They can destroy but a *single Out-Work*.

Addend. & Emendand.

PAge 60. l. 13. After—*Cyprian, &c.*—add—
And though Mention be also made of some Persons raised from the Dead in those Ages (as in *Irenæus*, l. 2. adv. *Hær.* l. 56, 57.) yet these Instances are rare, and ascribed only to *Supplication* and *Fasting*: A much more rational Cause, than those generally assigned to the numerous Miracles of the fourth and following Centuries.

P. 20. l. 21. & passim, r. succeeding

P. 27. l. 30. r. permitting,

P. 28. l. 28. r. excusable,

P. 39. l. 6. r. to be believed, &c.

P. ibid. l. 25. r. procedes

P. 41. l. 4. r. but, the lawful &c.

P. 54. l. 5. r. and were not intended to be produced in the Introduction, &c.

P. 62. l. 4. r. Euhodææ

P. 67. l. 26. r. easily

P. 69. l. 18. r. Stories, if &c.

P. 71. l. 13. r. But the Case is, that it is not agreed, in the present Debate, that any such plain Evidence &c.

P. ibid. l. 16. r. stands, so far, good &c.

P. ibid. l. last. r. the former, it is agreed, stand upon sufficient Evidence;

P. 72. l. 1. r. the latter, it is not agreed, stand upon Evidence of equal Authority—Therefore, &c.

P. ibid. l. 11. for plain r. sufficient

P. ibid. l. 14. r. ditto.

P. 72.

Addend. & Emendand.

P. 72. l. 25. r. where it is not agreed that there is sufficient &c.

P. 74. l. 12. r. Heigth

P. 78. l. 9. r. irreconcilable

P. 84. l. 5. r. supposable

P. *ibid.* l. 22. *dele* that.

P. 86. l. 11. r. supposable

P. 125. l. 4. r. have here added &c.

P. 130. l. 22. r. and that Their Testimony, is the only authentic, &c.

F I N I S

